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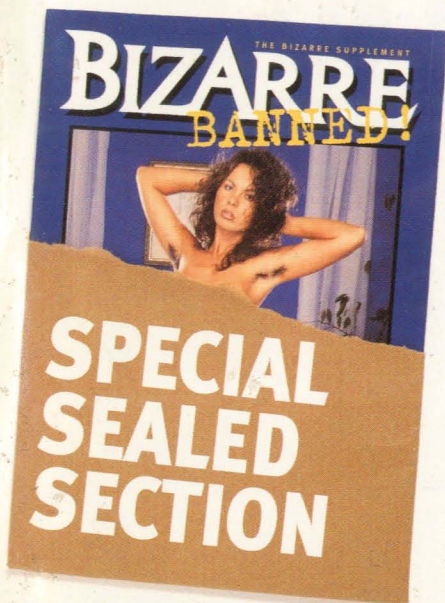
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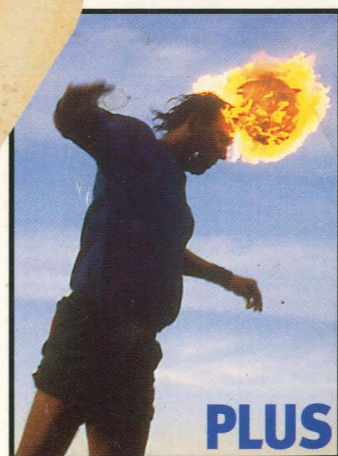


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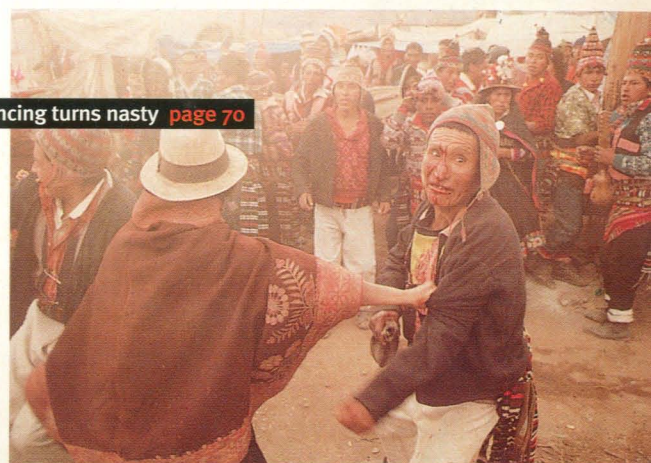
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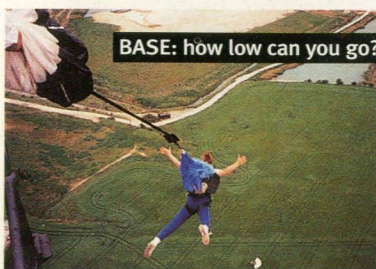
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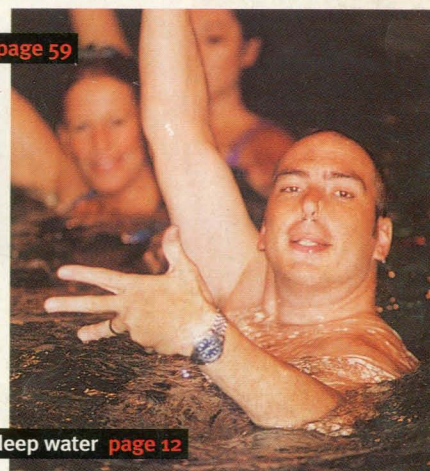
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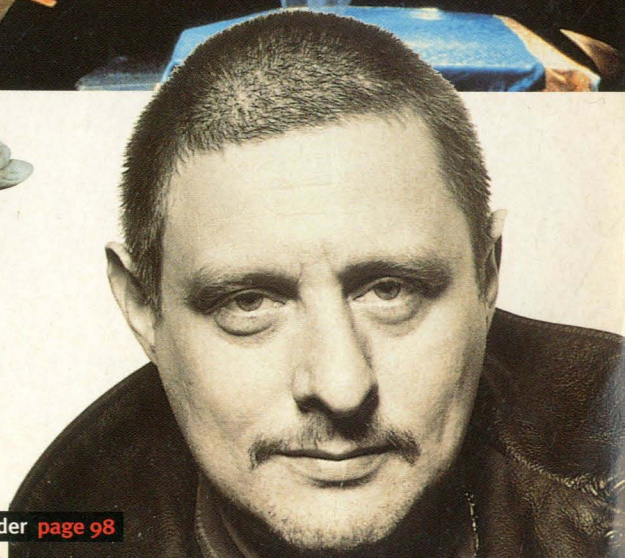
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Easy, Ryder **page 98**

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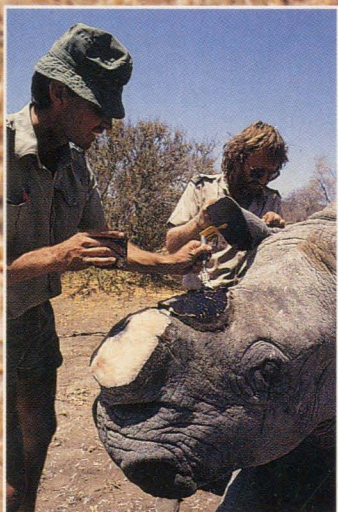


Getting the horn

A massive one-and-a-half ton black rhino has its horns forcibly removed – but the guys with the chainsaw aren't poachers, they're from the World Wildlife Fund.

A single rhino horn can sell for about \$150,000 – pound for pound, that's four times more valuable than gold – so they're targets for poachers, who don't care about the rest of the animal. As a result, in 1977 there were 65,000 black rhinos in Africa; today there are 2,000. Rhino horn is supposed to be an aphrodisiac, and in East Asia it's used to cure everything from nosebleeds to diphtheria. Items carved from rhino horn are signs of great wealth.

World Wildlife Fund operatives chainsaw off the rhinos' horns to stop poachers getting them, sealing the stumps afterwards. Without their horns rhinos find it harder to protect their young, but research shows they may be more likely to mate without the risk of a horn in the rear. It isn't a perfect solution, but it's a lot less lethal than the poachers' methods.

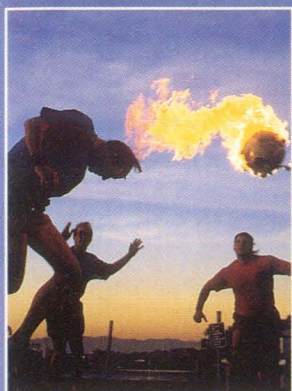




Spliff up the little children

Yes, that is a whacking great big joint. And yes, those are little kids taking a drag. These children are members of the Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church in Kingston, Jamaica. No boring communion wafers for them: the joint symbolises the body of Christ. They take the practice from Matthew 3:11: "Jesus Christ will baptise his followers with fire."

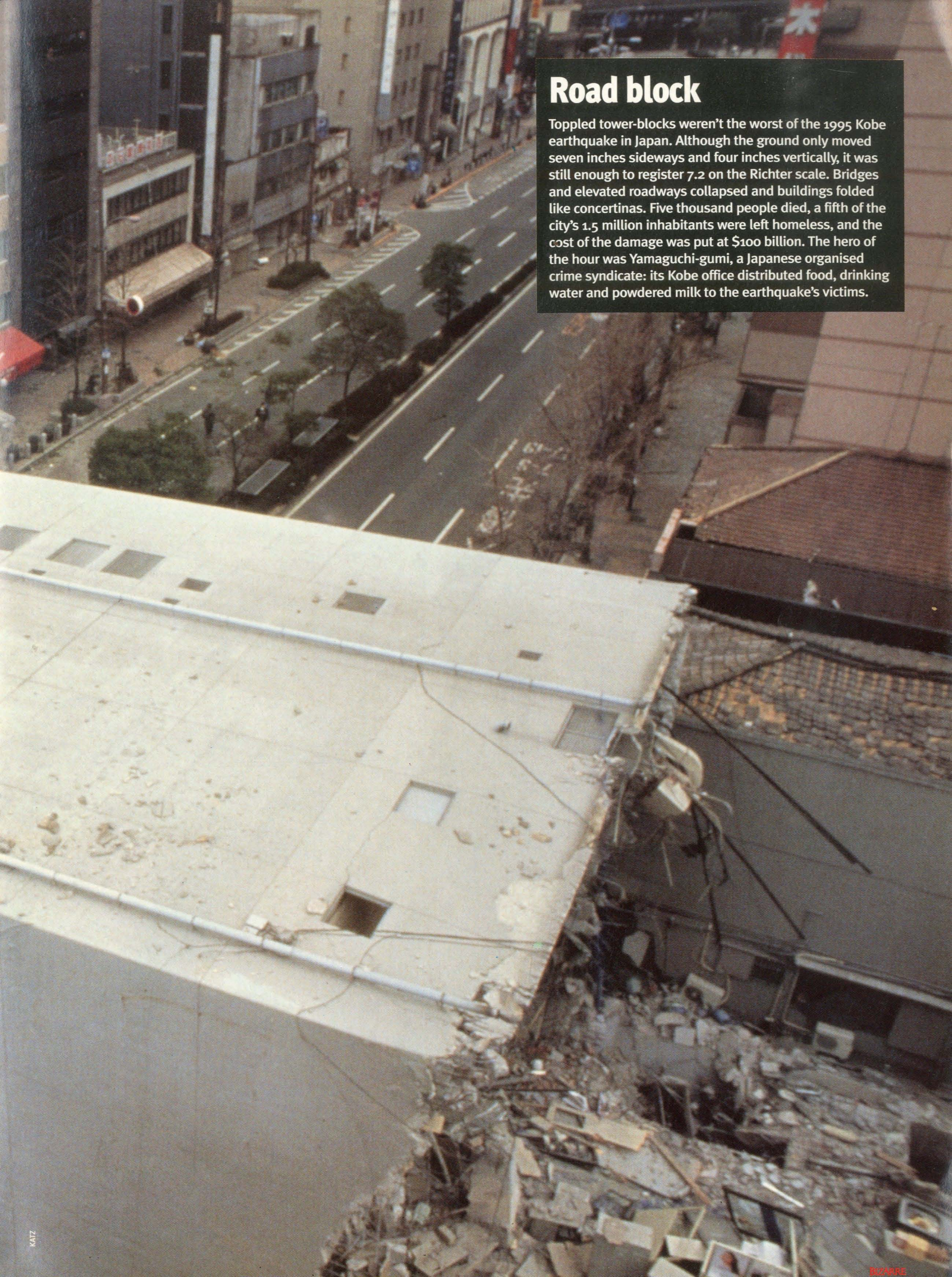
Cannabis is a part of many ancient religious traditions. The Assyrians used it as long ago as the 7th century BC, calling it Qunubu, and the Chinese Taoists added it to their incense burners in the 1st century BC as a means of achieving a kind of immortality. The Ethiopian Zion Coptic Church has come under a lot of flak for its practice but, as Walter Wells, Elder Priest of the Church in Jamaica, puts it: "Herb is a Godly creation from the beginning of the world. It is known as the weed of wisdom, angel's food, the tree of life... Its purpose in creation is as a fiery sacrifice to be offered to our Redeemer during obligations... Ganja is the sacramental right of every man worldwide and any law against it is only the organized conspiracy of political governments who assist in maintaining this conspiracy." We say: fair play to that, but what do the Rizlas represent?



Great balls of fire

In California the footballers are so tough they make Vinnie Jones look like a big girl's blouse. At least, the ones who play footie using a ball soaked in petrol are. Having heard of this unusual martial arts discipline from Java, where it's used to overcome peoples' fear of fire, Chuck Ward and his mates decided to give it a go. They were soon kicking the ball with their bare feet and even heading it, as the air filled with the smell of singed hair. Then Chuck bounced it off his chest. "When I looked down my chest was on fire!" he said with a sheepish grin. "I guess I shouldn't have wiped the gas off my hands onto my shirt..."



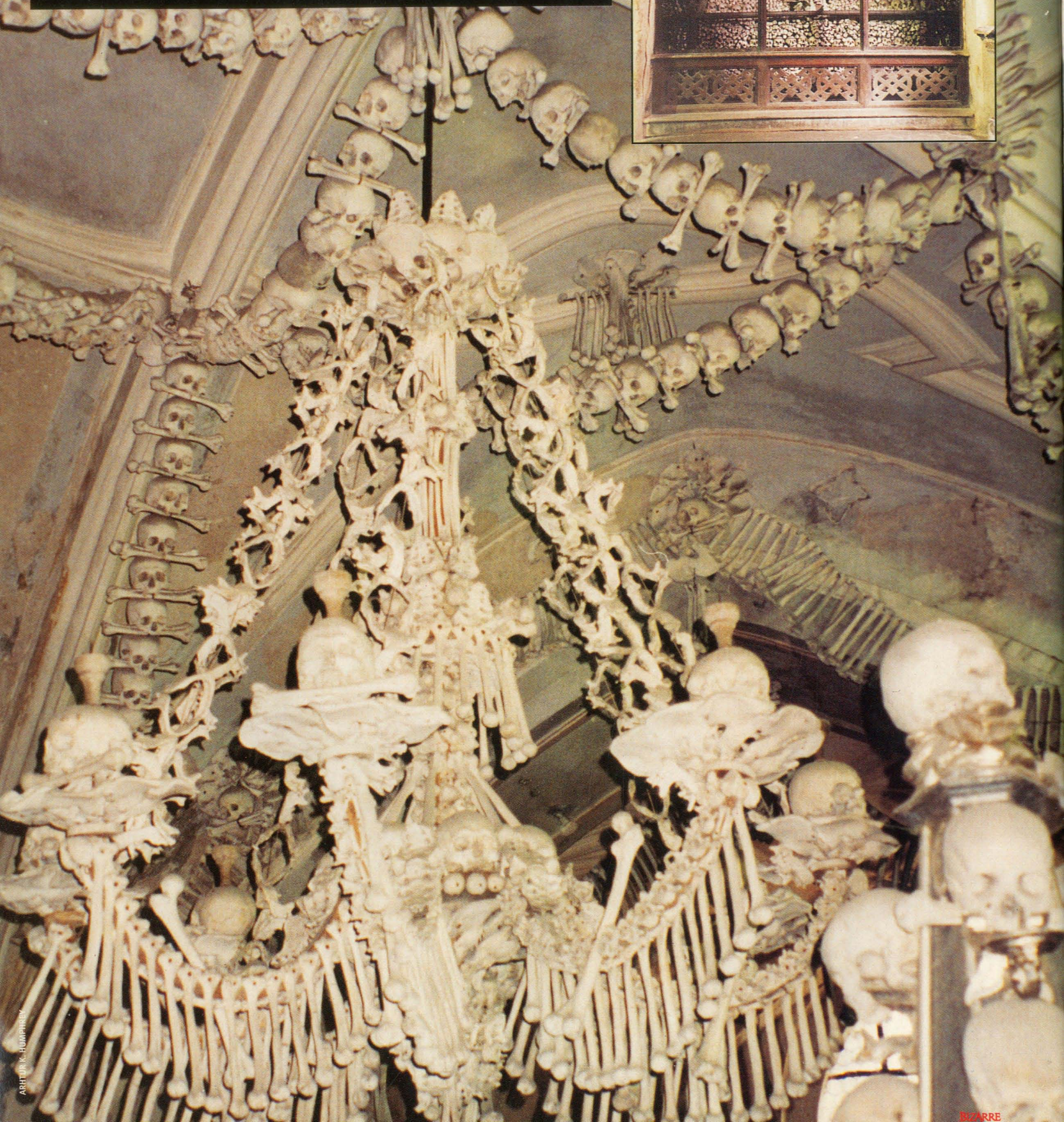
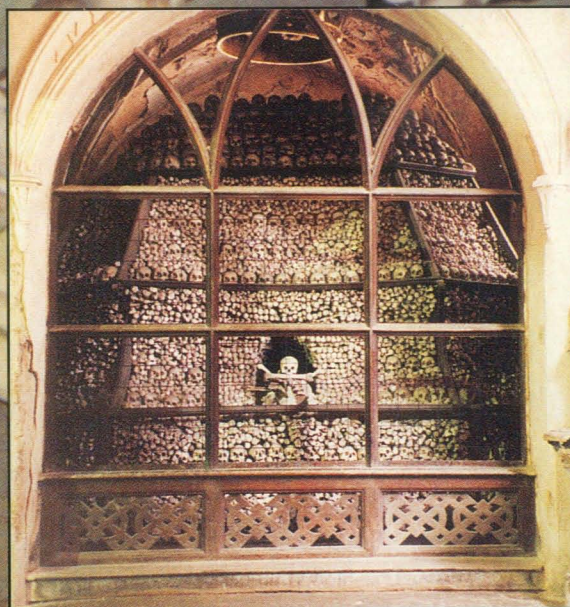


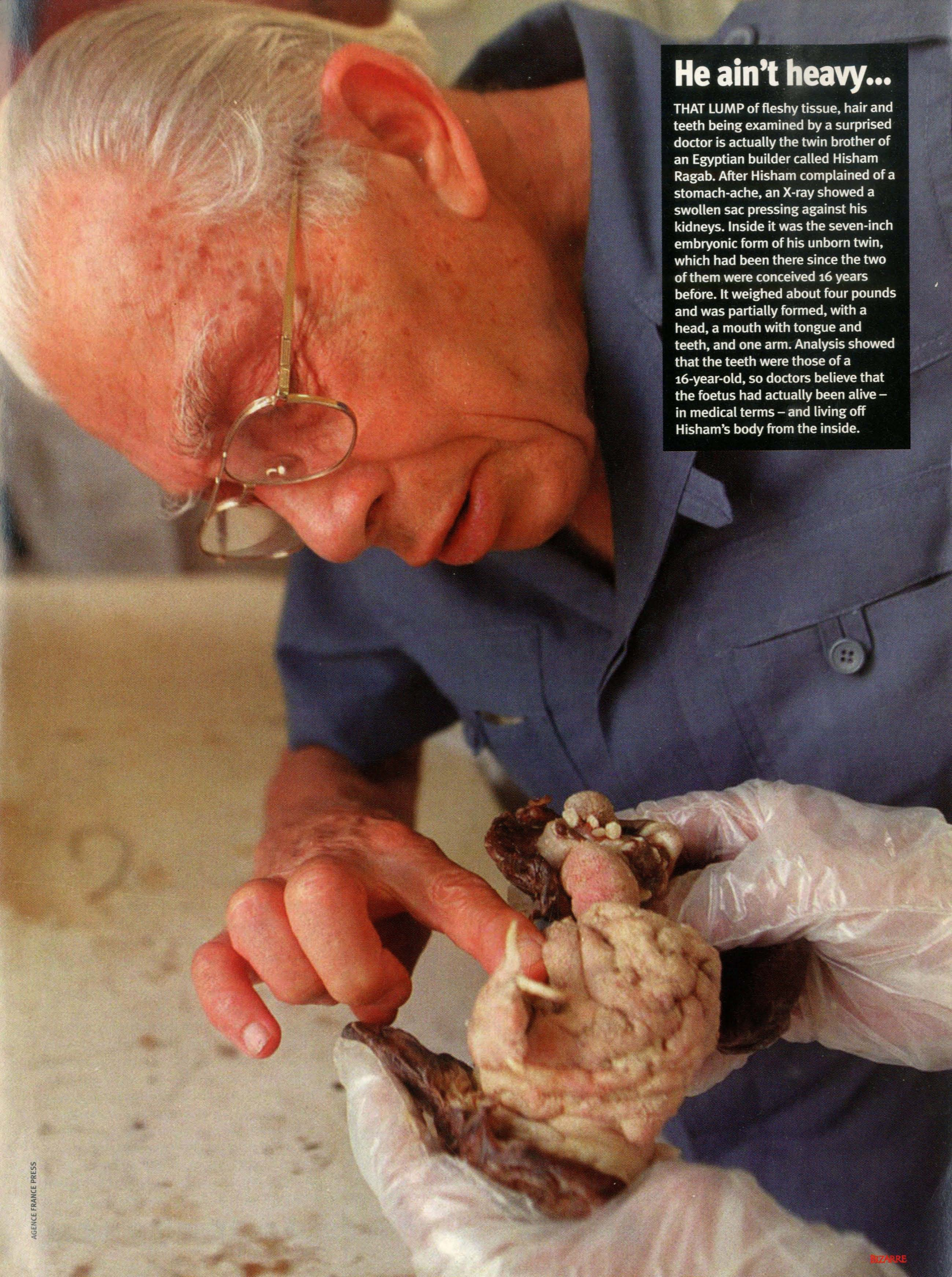
Road block

Toppled tower-blocks weren't the worst of the 1995 Kobe earthquake in Japan. Although the ground only moved seven inches sideways and four inches vertically, it was still enough to register 7.2 on the Richter scale. Bridges and elevated roadways collapsed and buildings folded like concertinas. Five thousand people died, a fifth of the city's 1.5 million inhabitants were left homeless, and the cost of the damage was put at \$100 billion. The hero of the hour was Yamaguchi-gumi, a Japanese organised crime syndicate: its Kobe office distributed food, drinking water and powdered milk to the earthquake's victims.

Skull, cross and bones

What do you do when your graveyard's full? Cremate bodies? Buy more land? Not the church of All Saints in Kutna Hora, in the Czech Republic. After a couple of goes at expanding its graveyard in the 14th century, in 1511 a half-blind monk began digging up bodies in the graveyard and storing them in the ossuary – bone-store – to make room for new arrivals. The amazing designs shown here weren't created until 1870 when Frantisek Rint (who wrote his name in bones on the wall) decorated the inside of the church with bits from the 40,000 bodies in the ossuary (right). Rint made each of the chandeliers out of a whole human body, as well as sucking up to the local nobility by recreating their coats of arms out of femurs and clavicles.





He ain't heavy...

THAT LUMP of fleshy tissue, hair and teeth being examined by a surprised doctor is actually the twin brother of an Egyptian builder called Hisham Ragab. After Hisham complained of a stomach-ache, an X-ray showed a swollen sac pressing against his kidneys. Inside it was the seven-inch embryonic form of his unborn twin, which had been there since the two of them were conceived 16 years before. It weighed about four pounds and was partially formed, with a head, a mouth with tongue and teeth, and one arm. Analysis showed that the teeth were those of a 16-year-old, so doctors believe that the foetus had actually been alive – in medical terms – and living off Hisham's body from the inside.



Scary, violent or just embarrassing: ROBERT SWIFT will attempt any mission, no matter how dangerous or daft, with no regard at all for his personal safety. Then he'll come back and tell all. If he survives.



How hard can it be to ponce around in a pool in nothing but a nose clip and spangled speedos, making starfish shapes with your arms and legs? Very, as our man in the water finds out

HAVE I GOT 'DICKHEAD' tattooed on my forehead or what? It's Saturday night but instead of larking it down the pub with my mates, I'm seriously out of my depth with a bunch of synchronised swimmers in a pool in Victoria, West

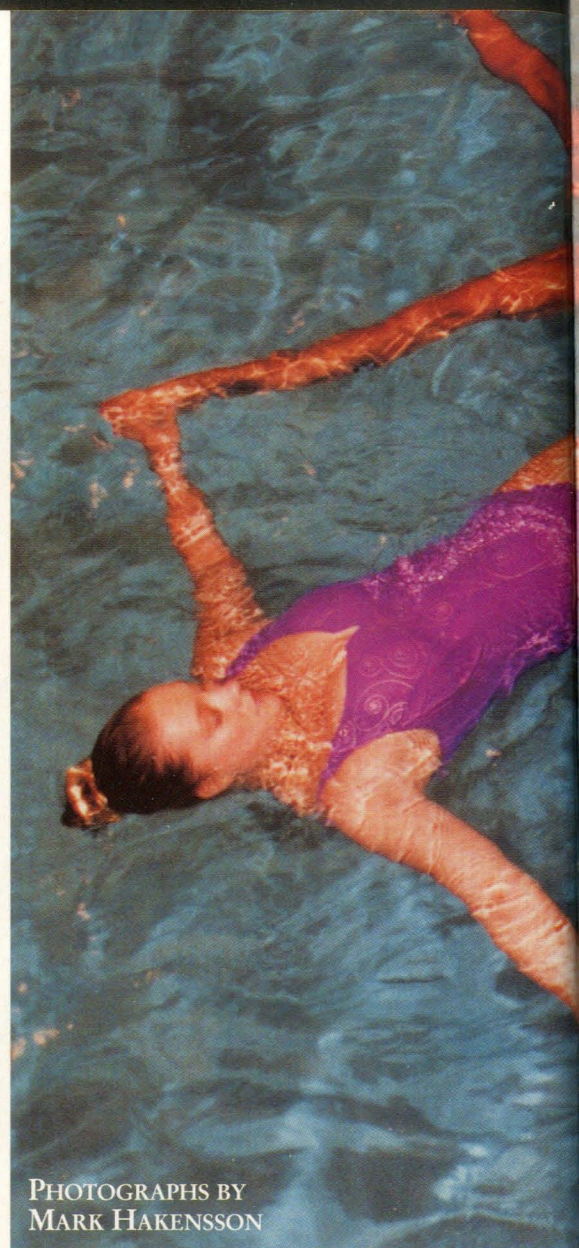
London, trying to fathom what on earth this dog of a hobby is all about.

Well, let me tell you, there's a lot more to it than meets the eye. Just like swans, the swimmers move gracefully on the surface with every movement measured. Under the surface is a

different story, their legs whirring like whisks. The seemingly dull sport of competitive synchronised swimming belies a skill so technical it would take you six months just to learn the basics and literally a lifetime to master the rest. It may surprise you to discover that some of the girls in these pics are drawing their pensions.

I, like most people, always treated synchronised swimming with the same disdain reserved for cookery competitions. To be totally truthful I thought it was a pile of dog poo and figured I would rather die than do it. I bracketed synchronised swimming with ice dancing and the pommel horse as the most pointless pastimes on earth. Its inclusion in the Olympics was as mystifying as the inclusion of tennis. "Well," I'd say, "It's not a *real* sport is it? It's just a load of women in bright purple cossies splashing about to some crap music. It's not a sport like football or running or something." And I was right, it's not. It's a damn sight more difficult.

Of course, synchronised swimming isn't dangerous in the way that base-jumping is. But it is just as demanding. And equally, synchronised swimming is not exciting in the same way that, say, a football match between Chelsea and Man United is, but it's just as skillful. It's also a lot more embarrassing than most sports, especially

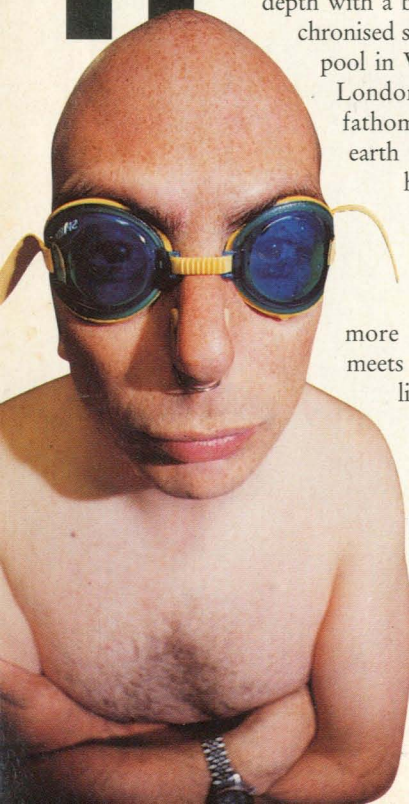


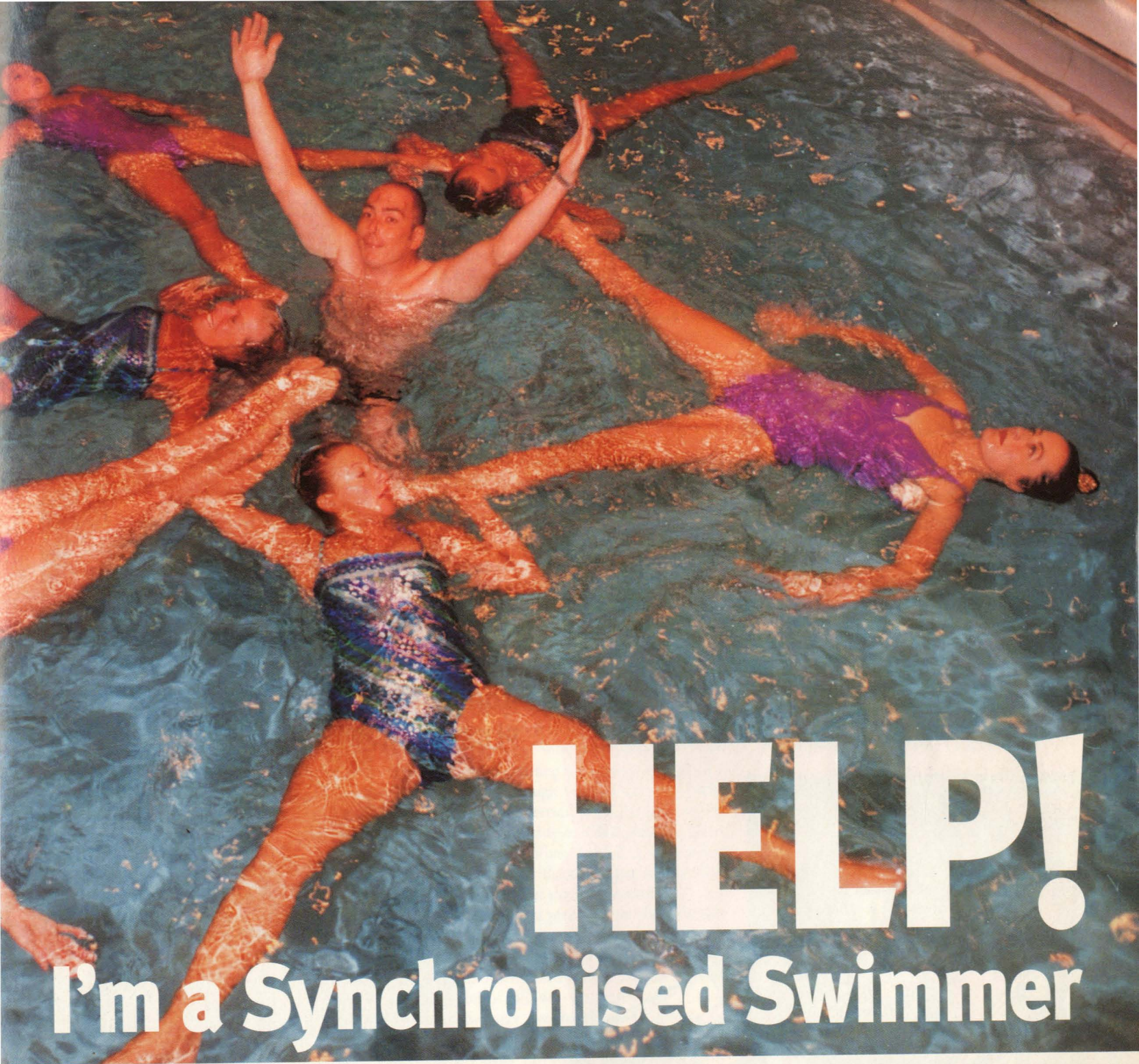
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
MARK HAKENSSON

when you're the only one wearing a pair of wee-nie wrappers the size of a new fifty pence piece. Never mind swimming upside down, my first challenge was to get into those tiny trunks. The second was to stop things constantly falling out. But what choice did I have? Executing an inverted V in my usual swimming shorts could have led to an eviction from the swimming baths for indecency. Which perhaps explains why I was to be one of only a handful of male synchronised swimmers in the world. "There used to be a man who did it," revealed one swimmer ominously. "But he died." I wondered if he'd drowned.

There are two disciplines in competitive synchronised swimming: standard figures that must be executed by every swimmer, and figure variations or freestyle. The standard figures, one swimmer told me, is where things can get nasty.

Smiling is to synchronised swimming what





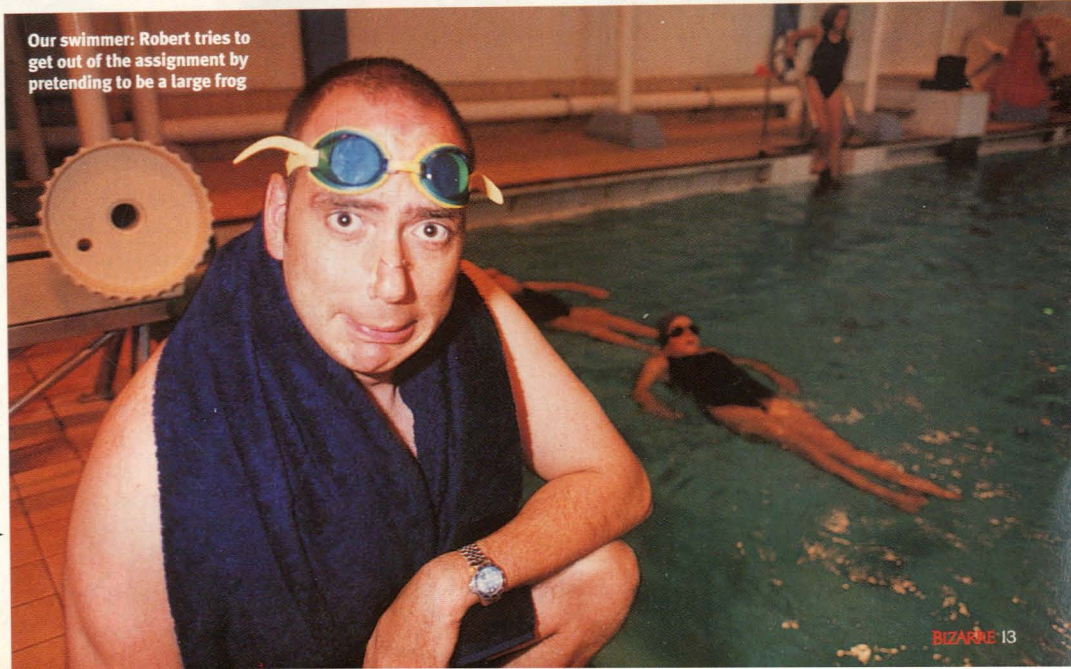
HELP!

I'm a Synchronised Swimmer

Every swimmer has to wear identical black costumes. They've also got to wear swimming goggles – “not so much to protect the eyes as to hide them,” whispered Sue Innes, a World Champion Gold Medallist and my coach for the night. “You see, things get very, very competitive in synchronised swimming and it's not unknown for judges to give better marks to girls they know, so all the girls have to look as anonymous as possible.” Just as well I wasn't competing. The only swimmer with a beer belly and a hairy chest could have been a dead giveaway.

Many swimmers also wear a nose clip, a thoroughly unpleasant piece of kit which made me feel like I'd got my face trapped in the hinge of a door, but kept the water out fairly well. I brought along ear plugs to wear too. Fortunately team member Georgina told me to take them

Our swimmer: Robert tries to get out of the assignment by pretending to be a large frog



punching's to boxing

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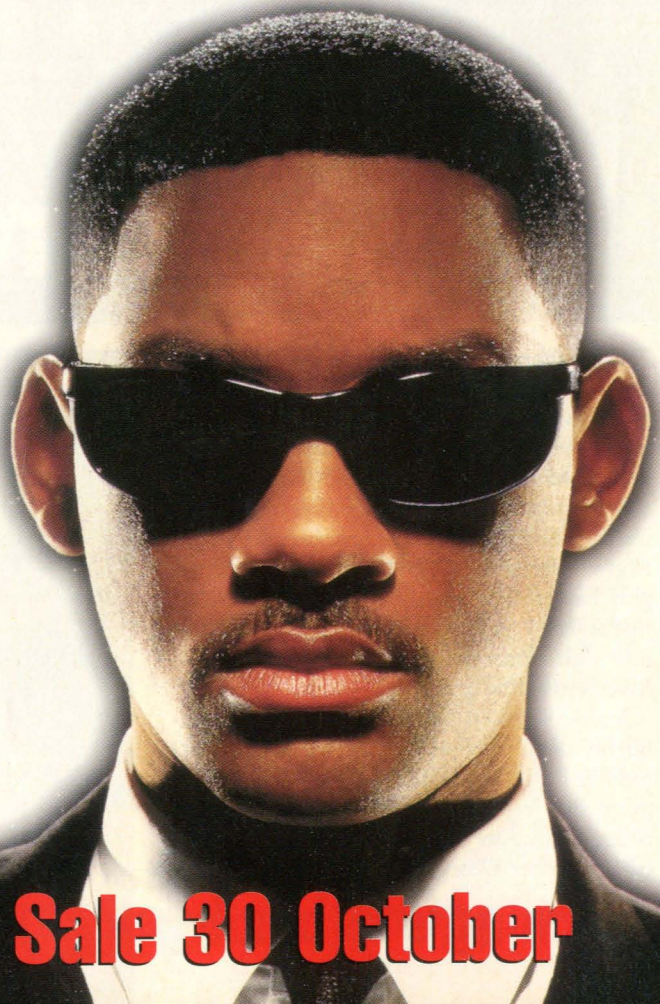
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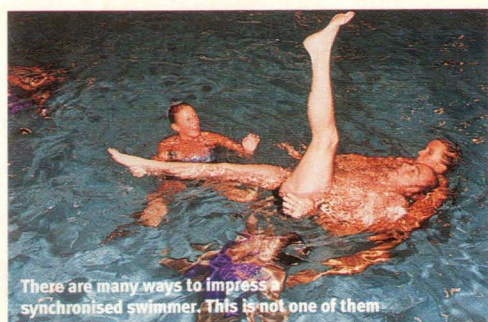
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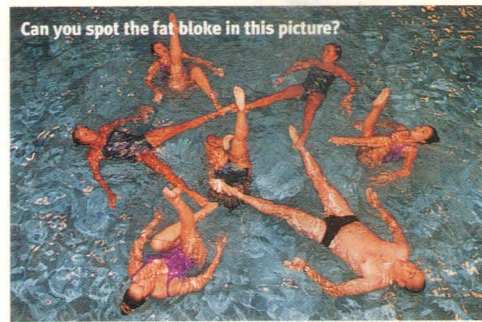
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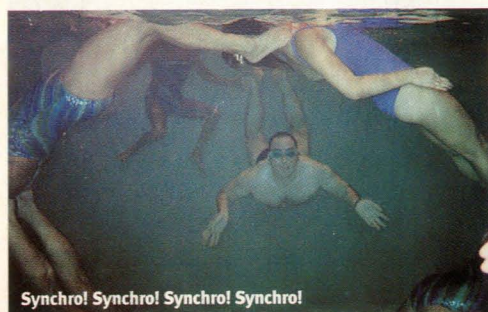
There are many ways to impress a synchronised swimmer. This is not one of them



Not waving but being drowned



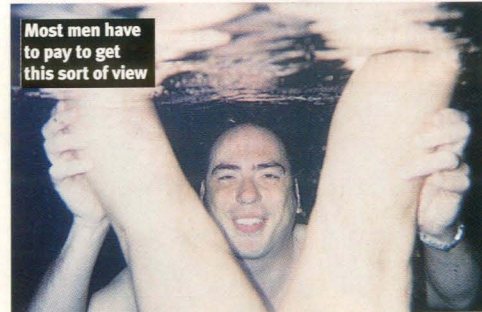
Can you spot the fat bloke in this picture?



Synchro! Synchro! Synchro! Synchro!



Who didn't cut their toenails this week?



Most men have to pay to get this sort of view

The Facts

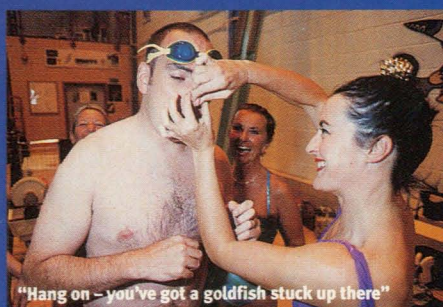
Synchronised swimming was introduced to the UK by Dawn Zajal in 1961, when she founded the Seymour Synchronised Swimming School which taught instructors and introduced the sport to various swimming clubs round the country. The SSSS is still going, and hosted Robert on his auto-drowning spree. For info contact Charlotte Hedge, 78 Halton Mansion, Halton Road, Islington N1 2BZ.

Synchronised swimming is an Olympic event but there are also World Championships and many other titles to compete for. There are usually eight swimmers in a team but there are also events for individuals, pairs and so on.

Even though you probably don't know it, there will be a synchronised swimming club near you. They're a secretive lot who don't shout too much about what they do because idiots like us laugh at them. Contact the Amateur Swimming Association on 01509 618714 or write to: Amateur Swimming Association, Harold Fern House, Derby Square, Loughborough, Leics LE11 0AL.

Don't worry if you're not too fit – a couple of practice sessions in the pool is like doing hours of aerobics so you'll soon be in shape – and you need to be fit because at Olympic standard you'd be doing six hours of stamina training every day! Ordinary competition swimmers go through their routines two or three times a week and swim most days in between as well.

Competitions are marked by a panel of judges who look for ease of movement on the surface, timing, responsiveness to the music (so don't choose anything too fast; the Chemical Brothers are definitely out), sincerity, elegance, projection and, if there's more than one of you, whether you're all doing the same things at the same time.



"Hang on – you've got a goldfish stuck up there"

out; apparently if you wear them in conjunction with a nose clip the resultant air pressure in your head could make it explode. Shit. Maybe that's how that bloke died.

The first thing I learned was how to float. If you're prone to sinking, you should probably go and get changed now. The second thing I learned was how to beat an egg. No, Delia Smith wasn't on the team, egg-beating is how you stay afloat or tread water. You know how synchronised swimmers always look like they're standing on a box hidden beneath the water? Well it's not all down to a diet of beans and pickled eggs. An experienced egg-beater can rise up to their waist above the surface of the pool and stay there – a skill that scores highly in competitions.

When the rest of the team were happy I wasn't going to drown on them, I was introduced to sculling. Sculling is the way that synchronised swimmers use their hands to move about the pool. In water it is much easier to move lying down than upright, so sculling is the way they manoeuvre their body into the various shapes

and patterns that a routine needs. Subtle changes to the angle of your fingers and palms produce different and precise movements.

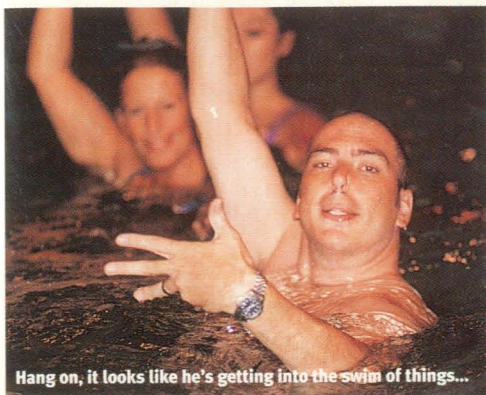
It takes months to master the art of sculling so I was content just to flap like a pigeon in a puddle as the team prodded, twisted, stretched and wrenched me into the shape of a half-decent synchronised swimmer. I tried my best but I knew even after five minutes that I would never be a contender. Having all the natural poise of a roof-rack doesn't help. These sportswomen are as elegant, versatile and flexible as ballet dancers with rubber legs. When I saw some of the positions some of them were getting into, I figured they'd be carrying me out of the pool in a pretzel-shaped body-bag.

Before I could attempt to join in with the team's proper routine there was one last thing to learn: the mysterious art of the fixed smile. Smiling is to synchronised swimming what punching is to boxing: vital. If that grin slips and the true nature of your groin-straining efforts is revealed, then you're about as much use to the

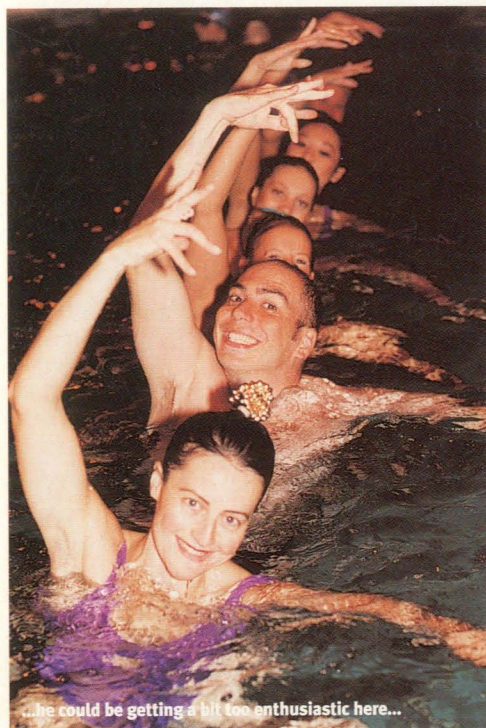
"There used to be one man who did it," said one swimmer ominously. "But he died."



Robert is clearly having a good time. His companion, on the other hand...



Hang on, it looks like he's getting into the swim of things...



...he could be getting a bit too enthusiastic here...

I tried my best but even after five minutes I knew that I would never be a contender

team as a lead swimming costume. I didn't find it too hard. It's something you learn when you get married. Only joking, dear.

In theory, synchronised swimming is a sport and an art form. It's like ballet in reverse: a quick inward movement of the right arm in front of your body helps you to pirouette to the left on dry land. If you do the same in water, you turn to the right. Geddit?

As Beulah O. Gundling says in the seminal synchro text, *Creative Synchronised Swimming* (read it before you die), "In water you can defy Newton's law of gravity because a greater effort is required to sink the body than to raise it." Which, in the scheme of things, still wasn't a whole heap of help when it came to attempting the near-death experience of the Crown of Thorns, my first synchronised pattern.

The team slotted me into the circle of linked swimmers, this time rotating backwards under water like a mini ferris wheel, each link only coming up for air every twenty seconds or so. I figured my lungs wouldn't take that kind of punishment and left it to the professionals.

One of the most impressive movements in synchronised swimming is the Inverted V with a Twist. It's hard enough to float on your back, never mind float vertically and upside down with your legs spread apart while spinning like a drill-bit. When I tried it I found it impossibly disorientating and literally couldn't get my head round it.

There are plenty more absurdly difficult manoeuvres like the boost. A boost is when one swimmer raises another quickly out of the water like a mini missile. The problem is that because synchronised swimming is carried out in a very deep pool, the booster can't get a push off the bottom, so all the power has to come from a couple of very powerful leg kicks. Just try that next time you're down the public baths, but don't blame me if you get chucked out for heavy petting.

There are a huge number of patterns, which constantly change. It's little wonder that many synchronised swimmers are grannies in their fifties, sixties and even older, as it takes so long to get to grips with it. Just trying to remember the names of the manoeuvres is hard: V Split Crisscross Twist, Bent-Knee Change, Shark-Dolphin-Shark, Backward Walkover Tap, Gym Potpourri, Spearfish, Flamingo. But personally I couldn't see my granny hitting the baths for some synch and swim – it's a little difficult to do with a glass of gin in one

Goose-stepping by the pool

Having attracted controversy when it was first admitted to the Olympic Games from spoilsports who claimed it wasn't a 'real' sport, synchronised swimming was back in hot water again at the last Olympics, when the French Government had to step in and ban their team from performing a routine based around Nazi Concentration Camps.

The team contended that their very serious-minded performance, sombre music and costumes were entirely respectful, and that they were pushing sports boundaries beyond its usual 'girls in glitter' image. Unfortunately Jewish organisations and their own government didn't agree, and pulled the plug on them.

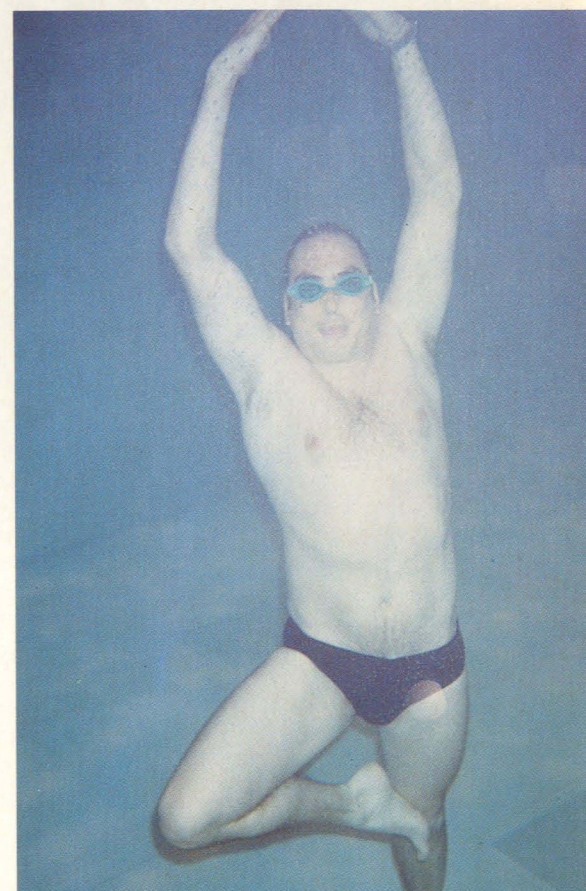
hand, a tin of catfood in the other and an Embassy Number One in your mouth.

When it comes to accidents and mishaps, these sportswomen practise endlessly to iron out any imperfection or mishap from their routines. But of course there's always room for disaster. "One of the worst things that could potentially happen to a synchronised swimmer is that he or she drowns, which is about as likely as you being part of the team for the Sydney Olympics," confided one swimmer. "Another is that you forget the routine and are no longer synchronised, merely, er, a swimmer. But I reckon top of the list must be weeing in the pool..."

Naaah, even I couldn't sink that low. **B**



...blimey, this is really quite impressive...



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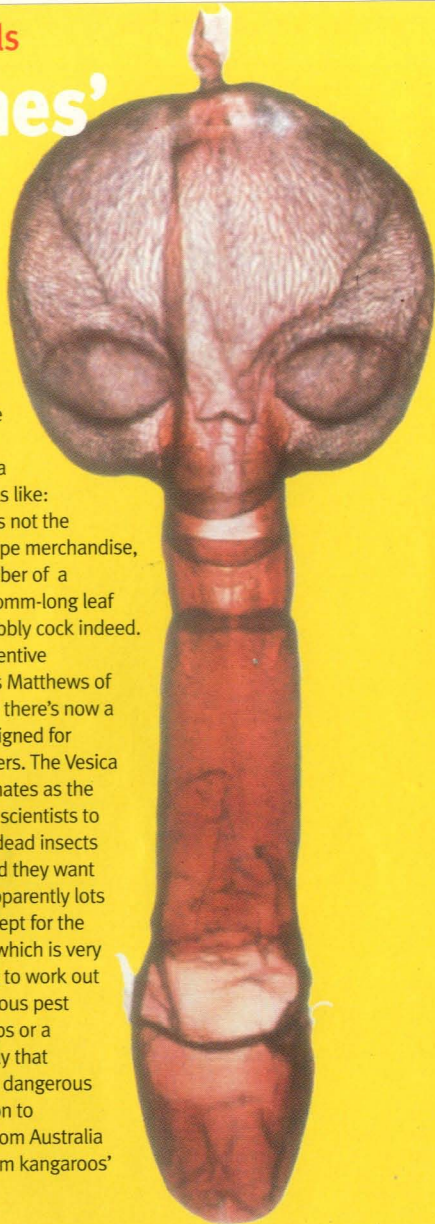
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BIZARRE STORIES

Insect genitals

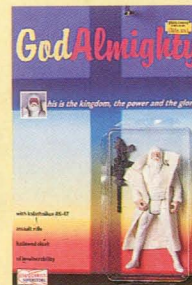
Roaches' cock

GREAT NEWS for those of you who've always wanted to know what a dead insect's dick looks like: the thing on the right is not the latest piece of alien-hype merchandise, it's the fully erect member of a *megamerus kingi*, a 30mm-long leaf beetle with a very knobby cock indeed. Thanks to the ever-inventive Australians (Dr Marcus Matthews of Canberra in particular) there's now a device specifically designed for studying insects' todgers. The Vesica Everter, known to its mates as the 'Phalloblaster', allows scientists to inflate the genitals of dead insects with air. But why would they want to, we hear you cry. Apparently lots of bugs look alike, except for the shape of their knobs, which is very important when trying to work out if exhibit A is a dangerous pest that'll ravage your crops or a harmless creepy-crawly that happens to look like a dangerous pest. The greatest boon to humankind to come from Australia since purses made from kangaroos' scrotums, we reckon.



By the power of Jehovah!

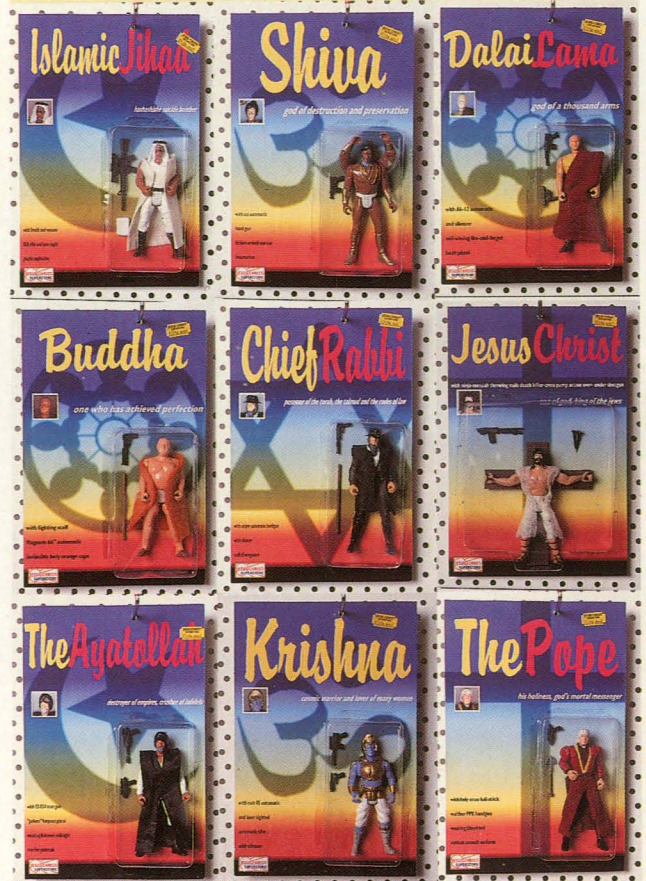
Almighty Morphin' Power Rangers



IN HIS FINAL year show at St Martins College of Art, student Oliver Huxter unveiled this set of religious action figures, complete with ideological weaponry. If they look like your treasured *Star Wars* toys, it's because he made the various body parts by dismembering one and creating his own moulds from it. The idea came from seeing television adverts for the Church of England, which, quite reasonably, Oliver found bizarre. So he decided to conduct what he calls "a marketing experiment-stroke-gag".

"I was trying to see how far I could push it and basically cause offence," he says. And did he succeed? "No one was offended at all." In a book left for visitors to record their comments, the most ardent display of disaffection was 'Jesus still loves you'. Oliver believes it's due to his sense of religious balance – where he hadn't produced a complete range of figures, 'SOLD OUT' signs were hung.

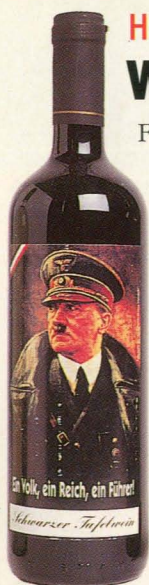
Having received offers to mass-produce the figures, Oliver is considering his options. He likes the idea of a 'Millennium Mosque' and filling in the gaps in the range, but is worried that a retail version would water down the gag. It would be ironic if they ended up in jumble sales in few years, but the public will have to wait a while before they can play out their own miniature jihads and crusades.



Hitler wine

Wine with a Nazi aftertaste

FIRST ITALIAN wine seller Andrea Lunardelli created a dry white Mussolini-brand wine, then a fruity merlot commemorating Adolf Hitler, the well-known teetotal dictator. After fighting off a legal challenge from a left-wing organisation, Lunardelli has now added Lenin, Che Guevara and motorbikes to his booze range. "It's not meant to upset people," he said. We don't believe him.



buddhas, buses and boozers

ODD JOB

Sex furniture maker



Kim Brown runs Eroteam, who'll make sexy stools and whipping benches to your specifications. He says he always had an interest in carpentry, so when he

decided to learn a trade, cabinet-making seemed a natural choice. Before long his furniture was featuring secret drawers for magicians and stocks and shackles for S&M enthusiasts.

What special skills do you need to be an erotic furniture maker?

An imagination. And the understanding of what people want. People come to me with all sorts of ideas... we can do pretty much anything. I've always been able to create whatever people have asked me for. I like to be able to satisfy my customers. In fact I've just finished building a Perspex dress.

Building?

Yes, it's made of four thicknesses of Perspex. It's more like a piece of furniture you wear than a garment. You get strapped into it, and there's a motor.

Um... a motor?

Yes.

Has anything you've ever been asked to make shocked you?

No, I don't have limitations like that. Safety's the only thing that bothers me, but I've always been able

to build safety in – if I couldn't then they'd have to get someone else to build it.

Don't you get bored making the same things over and over again?

I try to make each piece a little bit different to keep myself amused. The St Andrew's Cross [a large wooden X to which someone can be chained or strapped spread-eagled] is most popular. Also the rocking chairs – they blend into everyday furniture. And ladies like them better. The most difficult commission I've ever had was for a large bondage chair with lots of straps. It had to completely disassemble so it could be stored in the loft. A lot of people still like to keep their sex lives behind closed curtains."

What's so great about your job?

I've always liked things that are a bit unusual, and cabinet-making has allowed me to indulge my interest in sex with no limits. Business is booming: I sent three pieces to Hong Kong recently, and I've had an enquiry from a chain of lingerie shops in Syria.

Send £5 for Kim's catalogue to Thanet House, Denmark Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 2EN. And if you're an erotic artist interested in taking part in one of his art shows then he'd like to see your work.



"Cabinet-making has allowed me to indulge my interest in sex with no limits"

Vinyl killer

Out for a spin

From Japan, land of all things odd and miniature comes the Vinyl Killer, this cool, ultra-compact mobile record player made by Vacuum Records. The VW van circles around the surface of the record, blasting your top pop sounds from its tinny speaker. "Vinyl Killer is fastest car in the world!!!" reads the leaflet and at a top speed of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ RPM it's one groovy cruiser. Details at: www.osk.threewebnet.or.jp/~vacuum05



TOP TEN

Surprise endings

Ten masterpieces of modern suspense, lovingly ruined for you by BIZARRE

1 The Mousetrap (play)

The policeman did it. That's saved two hours of your life.



2 Citizen Kane (film)

'Rosebud' is not a woman, it's the sledge Kane owned as a boy.

3 The Usual Suspects (film)

Kevin Spacey, the wimp with the limp, is Keyser Soze.

4 The Crying Game (film)

Di, the gorgeous torch-singing romantic interest, is actually a bloke in a frock.

5 Angel Heart (film)

The P.I. is looking for himself, and Robert de Niro is the devil.



6 The Wasp Factory (novel)

The narrator is a girl, not a boy.



7 Seven (film)

The last victim is Brad Pitt's wife, and the killer has her head in a box.

8 Murder One (TV series)

The film star didn't do it. It was a goon from an early episode.

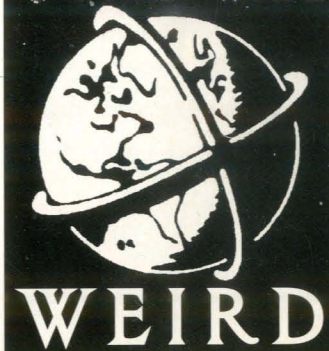
9 Psycho (film)

Bates is the murderer, dressing up as his dead mother to do the killings.

10 St Elsewhere (TV series)

The entire six-season series turns out to have been the daydream of an autistic child. Hurrah!

WORLD WIDE



Gobble gobble

A 32-year-old Sacramento woman is suing the American hospital which left a bit of tubing in her throat in 1978 for \$100,000. She claims that now she cannot "give her partner the joy and pleasure" that she thinks is his due. Apparently, BIZARRE reckons that if feeling something in her throat puts her off oral sex, then she wasn't giving him all the joy and pleasure she could anyway.

Lava lover

Looking for the ultimate high? Take our advice, don't drink the contents of your 60s retro lava lamp. A 65-year-old alcoholic did just that, and baffled doctors at the ER with his altered mental state, phenytoin poisoning and acute kidney failure, probably due to the low molecular weight of the polyethylene glycol (the gobby-looking bit that floats up and down). Amazingly, he survived.

And on the seventh day...

"We're trying to reconstruct the Holy Bible," Daxx Edder, the oddly named CEO of Quorum International Ltd, stated last month, of his plans to build a Holy Land theme park in Mesquite, Nevada, an hour's drive from the flesh-pots of Las Vegas. Plans include a 33-storey model of Jesus that you can climb inside and "the parting of the Red Sea. You would ride a tram past it like they do in the Universal Studios theme park". Only in America...

Wrinkly sock danger

According to the *Mainichi Daily News*, Adachi-ku, a 24-year-old man, was nicked for assaulting a 17-year-old student by rubbing his saliva into her hair. Adachi-ku claimed it was the state of her wrinkled socks that made him do it. "When I saw those socks, I just went crazy."

Not resting, just dead

A shopper at a department store in Johannesburg complained to staff that a mannequin lying face down on a bed in one of the window-displays was in bad taste. They didn't know the half of it: the 'mannequin' was the corpse of a shopworker who'd collapsed and died three days earlier. Nobody had noticed.

BIZARRE STORIES

Assassin Central

Snuffin' all over the world



Gangland take-down: Carmine Galante, 13 July 1979

One of America's most notorious gangsters since the heyday of the 1930s, Galante was gunned down by four neatly dressed men in Joe and Mary's Italian Restaurant in New York, along with his bodyguard and the restaurant-owner's son. One bullet was fired directly into his left eye: a traditional sign of a Mafia killing.

Assassinated for dancing: Sitting Bull, 15 December 1890

When the great leader of the Hunkpapa Sioux told his people to learn the anti-white Ghost Dance ceremonies, the US Government ordered his arrest. 43 Indian police surrounded his cabin in Montana. Sitting Bull surrendered, but as the police were leaving they were confronted by Ghost Dancers, who shot at them. During the fracas the political threat of Sitting Bull was removed for good by Sergeant Red Tomahawk.

Stupidest explanation: John Lennon, 8 December 1980

Mark Chapman has never really explained why he shot John Lennon with four flat-tipped bullets outside the musician's flat in New York. "I heard in my head, 'Do it, do it, do it,'" he said. Lawyer Fenton Bresler sees this as evidence that he had been hypnotised into carrying out the killing. But no assassination is complete without a good conspiracy theory.

Biggest conspiracy (allegedly): Robert Kennedy, 5 June 1968

Bobby Kennedy, JFK's younger brother, was campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination. He'd just given a speech in the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles when Sirhan B. Sirhan shot him three times with a .22 pistol. Conspiracists link this killing with the JFK assassination, and claim Sirhan was either hypnotised or working under orders.

The most famous assassination of them all: John F. Kennedy, 22 November 1963

It was an accident. Oswald was cleaning his gun and it went off.

Life imitates film imitating life: Ronald Reagan, 31 March 1981

The attempted shooting of Alabama Governor George Wallace inspired the film *Taxi Driver*. John Hinckley, Jr. became obsessed by the movie and then fixated on Jodie Foster. When she wouldn't answer his love-letters, he tried to impress her by shooting Ronald Reagan outside the Hilton Hotel in Washington. He fired six shots, wounding Reagan, his press secretary, a secret service agent and a policeman. Conspiracy theorists claim there may have been a second gunman.

Favourite Dark Ages method: Edmund Ironside, 30 November 1016

King of England in 1016, Edmund fell foul of a method of assassination particularly favoured by British assassins: a stab up the jacksie. Edmund had many rivals including Canute and Eadric Streona. The latter hid himself in the king's privy and stabbed him from below, leaving his dagger lodged in the king's arse. Unfairly Eadric ended up with his head on a pole, while Canute was declared king.

Most famous Irish victim: Michael Collins, 22 August 1922

When Collins and Arthur Griffith negotiated the 1921 treaty between Britain and Ireland, the 31-year-old said, "I have signed my death warrant." A few months later, as civil war between pro- and anti-Treaty factions broke out, he returned to his home county of Cork. Returning from the pub one night, passing through Beal na mBlath, he was ambushed and shot dead – probably by irregulars, but possibly by his own men.

Radical assassination: Malcolm X, 21st February 1965

While the radical leader of the Organization of Afro-American Unity was giving a speech at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, a smoke bomb detonated at the back of the hall. A man stepped forward and fired a shotgun into X's chest. As he collapsed, two others rushed forward, shooting and hitting him 15 more times. The three then fled with the panicking audience, but were caught and given life imprisonment.

Most justly deserved desserts: Jean Paul Marat, 17 July 1793

Marat was one of the firebrands of the French Revolution, calling for the deaths of 200,000 people. In Paris, he agreed to meet a young girl, Charlotte Corday, who said she had important information for him. As he lay in his bath she stabbed him in the neck: he had been responsible for the execution of her lover. She was guillotined.

Unlikeliest political victim: Frederico the goat, 15 September 1996

Petrucio Maia nominated his goat Frederico as a candidate for mayor of Pilar in Brazil, as a protest statement – but when Frederico started topping the opinion polls, someone didn't see the joke. Shots were fired at Frederico's election bandwagon. They missed, but a few days later the goat was poisoned.

Food bombs

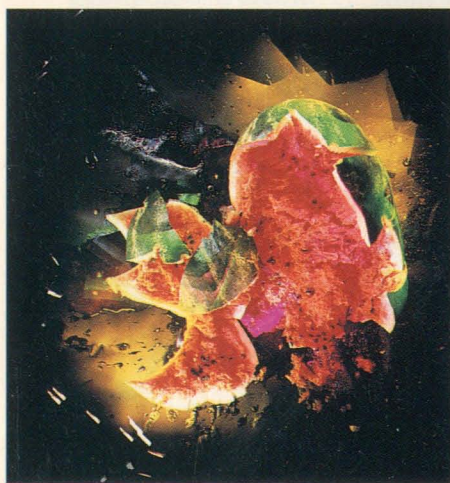
Fruit of the loon

LOOKING for a way of getting your own back on annoying sods, but can't get dynamite? Use food. No, really. It can go off in more ways than one. Two three-litre jars of pickled cucumbers left out in the sun in a block of flats in the city of Vladimir, 100 miles north-east of Moscow, exploded with a blast that shook the whole building and blew out the glass in every window.

Canada's eco-friendly Fruitabomber went the other way, hiding bombs in watermelons. His first attack, on 16 May 1996, ripped apart a bus shelter in the suburbs of Edmonton, Alberta.

Within seconds a second melon was detonated elsewhere in the city. "The so-called Fruitabomber has cops fearing a rash of city-wide melon bombings, and police are asking markets to keep an eye peeled for young men buying large pieces of fruit," Sgt Brian Boulanger of the Edmonton Police Department told BIZARRE at the time, with an amazingly straight face.

Something to try in someone else's home is the chicken bomb – pack a screw-top jar with chicken giblets, fill it up with milk and replace the lid. Hide it somewhere hot in your victim's house: the back of the sofa or near a radiator. The rotting meat will produce enough gas to explode the jar, showering the area with gunk and a stink that's almost impossible to get rid of. So we're told.



Most notorious KGB rub-out:

Georgi Markov, 7 September 1978

The KGB tried three times to kill Bulgarian defector Markov, who was working in London for Radio Free Europe and the BBC. Two poisonings failed, but finally an agent approached Markov in a bus queue and fired a tiny pellet into his leg from a specially modified umbrella. The pellet contained 450 micrograms of the biotoxin ricin. Markov died four days later.

Most successful Nazi assassination:

Reinhard Heydrich, 27 May 1942

Heydrich, known as 'the Hangman of Europe', was Himmler's second-in-command, responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths. In 1942 the Czech government in exile parachuted two assassins into the countryside outside Prague. Their sten-gun jammed as Heydrich drove past, so they threw a grenade into his car. Heydrich died nine days later. Over 1300 people were killed by the Nazis in reprisal, including the assassins.

Hardest to kill:

Grigory Rasputin, 16 December 1916

Rasputin, a wild monk from the peasant classes, became very influential with the Russian Tsar by curing his son of haemophilia. Prince Felix Yusupov believed he was a foreign agent and lured the mystic to his castle. Rasputin was given cakes and wine laced with cyanide, and when neither had any effect, Yusupov shot him. Rasputin grabbed the prince and started choking him, so another conspirator shot him in the back. The corpse was physically abused, chained and dumped into the icy Neva river.

Most nearly bungled: Archduke Ferdinand, Sarajevo, 28 June 1914

When the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire visited Sarajevo, a team of six Bosnian assassins was after his life. Three of them panicked and did nothing; one threw a bomb which missed, the fifth became confused, and the sixth – Gavrilo Princip – got lucky when the Archduke's car stopped five feet from him. Two shots later, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia and started the first World War.

Most polite assassin:

Ghandi, 30 January 1948

As the Indian leader walked to prayers, an assassin pushed through the crowd, bowed, and shot him three times. The assassin was Nathuram Vinayak Godse, editor of a Marathi-language newspaper, who said, "My respect for the Mahatma was deep and deathless. It therefore gave me no pleasure to kill him."

First political assassin:

Hassan Bin Sabbah, 1050-1124

Founder and leader of the Hashshashin, the eaters-of-hashish, a fanatical Ismaili cult who waged war against the Seljuk Turk and Sunnite nations by nailing their leaders. Sabbah taught his followers to treat assassination as a religious ritual, and fed them drugs to numb their fear.

Most violent Roman assassination: Emperor Caligula, January AD41

Vicious, violent, power-crazed and almost certainly mad, in his four-year reign Caligula tormented everyone around him, including Cassius Chaerea, colonel of the Imperial Guard. Goaded beyond endurance, Cassius intercepted the Emperor on the way to his private theatre in Rome and stabbed him ten times, then did away with his wife and dashed his kid's brains out. And there was much rejoicing.

Last attempted papal assassination: Pope John Paul II, 13 May 1981

When Mehmet Ali Agca pumped two bullets into Pope John Paul II as the Popemobile passed through St Peter's Square, Rome, everyone wanted to dismiss it as the work of a lone loon. Although Mehmet claimed that Bulgarian agents working for the KGB had trained him, evidence suggested he was actually part of a Turkish Islamic group. Conspiracy nuts prefer the KGB version.

WORLD WIDE



WEIRD



Buzz on the beach

Time was when all you had to do to impress girls at a fair was thwack a pad with a big hammer and ring the bell. Now visitors to the Belgian seaside face another test: sitting in a mock electric chair which imitates the sensation of high voltage shocks. The chairs actually use violent vibrations. If you withstand the highest dosage then smoke billows out. Needless to say, although some people have branded them tasteless, they've become a huge success.

Slings & arrows

Students at Molalla High School in Oregon were up in arms in May this year because of a school rule demanding that all female students wore bras. Two girls were sent home for not following the policy, leading to 200 students petitioning to have the rule overturned – on the ground that more amply-endowed girls were being discriminated against: no one noticed when the flat-chested girls flouted the rules.

Pass the sick bag

Seventy-six top Russian aviation officials flying to the US refused to take a flight on Aeroflot, their national airline, because of concerns over the safety of the planes. Instead they took a Finnair flight. They were probably right. Two months earlier a Stavropol Airlines jet literally fell apart in the air because it was so rusty, killing 50 passengers.

Addicted to love

Two Chinese heroin addicts celebrated their wedding by using their parent's cash gift to purchase enough scag for all their guests to get high. Police in the western city of Chongqing burst in mid-trip and the couple are now in rehab.

Judge bites man

When Bill Witten, 29, made a derogatory remark about the judge during his bond-reduction hearing he ended up getting his nose bitten. According to police Captain Terry Snodgrass: "Mr. Trosi stepped down from the bench, removed his robe, and there was a confrontation. During the confrontation, Mr. Witten's nose was injured."

Wanking aids Handyman

YOU MUST have been in this situation: beer in one hand, channel changer in the other, surfing the old satellite, when suddenly you fancy a wank. No longer a problem, thanks to the amazing Vibrating Handy-Hand, 'a fleshy love-hand that will lavish your hot erection like no other satisfier'. At least that's what it says on the box. Unfortunately this didn't turn out to be entirely true. Our crack tester complained: "The vibrating motion'll get you stiff, but unless you grab hold of it and start jerking it up and down, that isn't enough to... er... bring you to fruition." So now you know.



WAY TO GO

5. Death by organ

Mouth organ, that is. Excitable Ramon Barrera found fame – albeit limited – as the player of the 'world's smallest mouth organ'. It was a good career until the day in January 1994 when, during a gala performance in Iguala, Mexico, he got carried away, sucked when he should have blown, swallowed his harmonica, and choked to death.



BIZARRE STORIES

Make yourself a drink

On the piss

SARAH MILES does it. Mahatma Gandhi would do it if he was still alive, and Madonna's reputedly keen. On drinking pee, that is. Indian holy men and other mystical types do it too – over there, urine therapy dates back over 5,000 years. You may even be benefiting from it yourself: all the piss from American portaloos is processed by Enzymes of America to make drugs. And the fertility drug Nun's Urine is made from exactly that. In the interests of improving the health of our readership, here's **BIZARRE's** quick guide to drinking your own waste products.

- DO sup first thing in the day, when your piss is at its purest.
- DON'T drink it in the evening or you won't get any sleep.
- DO put a dab of urine behind your ears before that important date. It's full of pheromones and doesn't smell.
- DON'T put a dab of urine behind your ears if you've been eating lots of garlic or asparagus – you'll stink.
- DON'T drink your urine after taking prescription drugs or recreational pharmaceuticals, or getting drunk. Unless you're really cheap and want to recycle the effects, of course.

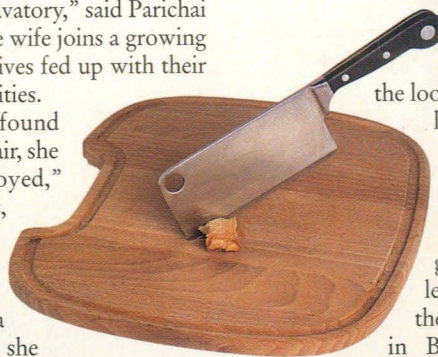


Thai penis chopper panic Slice-off wife

THAI WOMEN have been taking revenge on their adulterous husbands in a way that brings tears to your eyes. "Pain shot through my body, and I woke up screaming. She flushed my penis down the lavatory," said Parichai Saruwong, whose wife joins a growing crowd of Thai wives fed up with their husbands' infidelities.

"When she found out about my affair, she was very annoyed," Saruwong recalls, "but after a few days she calmed down." Not much, though: a few weeks later she took a meat cleaver to his tackle.

Thai police estimate that more than 100 men have been mutilated since 1993 when Loretta Bobbitt started the trend for very physical revenge. Since then a few cases have been reported in China, Japan and Australia, but nothing like the number in Thailand. As



Siriporn Skrobawek, the director of the Bangkok-based Foundation for Women, explained: "Thai women are deeply frustrated over their situation in this male-dominated society."

Many of the wives threw the organs away or fed them to animals – for some reason, particularly ducks – but after a few had been re-attached, the vengeful

women have taken to flushing them down the loo, or tying them to helium balloons and letting them go into the sky.

Meanwhile it's not all doom and gloom for todgerless Thai men. At the Siriraj Hospital in Bangkok, Doctor

Surasak Muangsombut has

become a world leader in microsurgery for penis re-attachments. Dr Muangsombut and his team have now successfully re-attached 31 penises, although he admits, "I got into the business to do nose jobs. I never wanted recognition for my penis work."

Tokyo Parasite Museum



BUG OUT!

ASIDE FROM the directors of British Gas, one of the world's largest collections of parasites is in Tokyo. The Meguro Parasitological Museum, established in 1953 by Dr Saturo Kamegai (now aged 87), has over 45,000 of these food-chain spongers and 300 notable specimens are on display to the public. The parasites, who normally live in and off other living things, are preserved in formalin and arranged around tasteful displays of their habitats and hosts.

The collection includes some big and beautiful mother-suckers. The pic above shows a nasty organism caught feasting on a monkey's brain (a much cheaper way to fuck with your head than LSD). But the real star of a show is a 27-foot tapeworm. This who-ate-all-the-pies worm was found inside the not-so

small intestine of a 40-year-old man who ate it in egg form as part of a sushi dish. The tapeworm grew to this size in three months and was removed in one piece – through which orifice we are not told.

If you look on the wall you will see a tape measure thoughtfully mounted to give visitors the chance to pull out 27 feet of tape. It comes out of the mouth of a cheeky face – well, even the Japanese wouldn't have used an arse.

Dr Kamegai set up the small single-roomed museum at his own expense just after the war. It's now grown into a six-storey building, with a collection boasting 20 new species discovered by the museum, including a variety of parasite which only lives on the

The real star of the show is a 27-foot tapeworm

prehistoric fish, the coelacanth.

Parasites once considered extinct in Japan have also been rediscovered by the museum. This, say the curators, is down to the increase of overseas travellers and imported fruit and veg. So beware men from strange places bearing bananas.

The museum attracts about 50,000 visitors a year, mostly young people and couples. There's even a gift shop which sells T-shirts, postcards and other parasite paraphernalia – though not a vibrating 27-foot tapeworm, more's the pity.

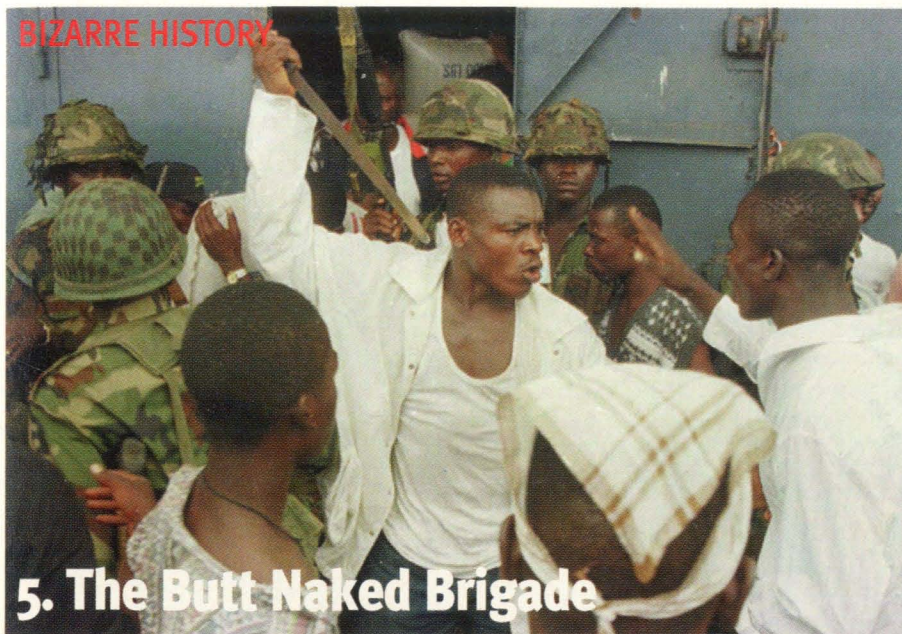
Meguro Parasitological Museum, 4-1-1 Shimomeguro, Meguro Ward, Tokyo. Open from 10am to 5pm. Closed on Mondays, National Holidays and from 29 Dec to 4 Jan.



An insider's guide: it's the museum of internal squatters that give you squitters



BIZARRE HISTORY



5. The Butt Naked Brigade

THE CIVIL WAR in the western African nation of Liberia, which began on Christmas Eve 1989 and ended earlier this year, rates among the most surreal combats ever fought. Started as an attempted coup, it quickly disintegrated into running battles between gangs of transvestites, people wearing Halloween costumes and kids of ten armed with machine-guns. Add human sacrifice, satanism, cannibalism, football played with human heads and tons of heavy armaments, and you've got everything you need for a classically silly bloodbath.

Supposedly there were two sides — Charles Taylor's amusingly named 'Ruling Party' and the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO). But there was also the Independent Patriotic Front, who videoed themselves torturing the last ruler of Liberia to death, and the Armed Forces of Liberia, plus several other minor factions. It was, basically, confusing.

But one name stands out among the role-call of ridiculous Liberian warriors: General Butt Naked. In a conflict which also produced General No Mother No Father and General Fuck Me Quick, General Butt Naked and his Butt Naked Brigade became legendary figures. They fought completely naked except for tennis shoes and guns, to terrify their opponents. In a war where most of the soldiers were in their early teens,

many on drugs, and some dressed in womens' clothes, going naked into battle might seem just another way to attract attention. Yet the Butt Naked Brigade were so feared that anyone seen naked and armed was assumed to be one of them. The General himself used to be cheered when he rode his bike through the capital city. But all that has changed. The general has put down the gun and put on a dog-collar.

In June 1996, in the middle of a battle on the New Bridge in Monrovia, God appeared to General Butt Naked and told him he was not a hero, as he'd thought, but a slave to Satan. Four months later he became a preacher. "I was deep into occult," he says, now clothed and known by his real name of Joshua Milton Blahyi. He claims he made a pact with the Devil at the age of 11, and his troops' nakedness was to bring them satanic protection. He also sacrificed humans — usually small children — before going into battle. Now, although the war is over, he battles on. "Even now I'm fighting. I'm fighting a spiritual war," he says.



WORLD WIDE



WEIRD

Busted

Few of us would admit where they got their injuries if they were caused by the 88-inch chest of a strip club performer. But Bernie Carson's a man among men, so he's suing PT's Show Club of Belleville, Illinois for \$200,000 for "emotional distress, mental anguish and indignity", claiming to have ended up "bruised, confused, lacerated and made sore" by the mammoth 40lb mummies of one Busty Heart.

Chitty chitty bang bang

Good news for any trigger-happy rednecks in Louisiana. You can kill thieves and you won't even have to stand trial. A law's been passed to let you shoot anyone who tries to steal your car while you're in it, provided you have a permit to carry the handgun you kill them with. Nice rednecks will, of course, merely wound criminals. Maybe just kneecap them.

Outward bound

In an effort to control unruly passengers (how many free drinks do these guys give out?) Japan Airlines are now allowing their flight attendants to tie up people who get out of hand, following a steep increase in attacks on cabin crew.

Scene of the rhyme

Geoffrey and Aaron Kuffner are currently being charged with terrorism for mailing and hand delivering suspicious packages to local government offices and newspapers and TV stations in New Orleans. None of them contained a bomb — instead there was just a manifesto stating that 'Violent Acts of Consciousness Have Only Begun', whatever that means. The Kuffner Brothers' aim was to draw attention to public ignorance of poetry: their first demand was that all state inaugural speeches should be written in iambic pentameters.

Mooning around

For the last two years Dr Hiroshi Kanamori, a Japanese engineer, has been crushing simulated versions of moon-rocks. He's trying to find a way to use the moon-material to make cement, which colonists could use to build hotels for the eventual inevitable lunar tourist industry. Japanese businesses have now spent \$40m on moon-type projects.

You are what you eat Like a pig in...

"Often the only time you realise Indian toilets don't flush but have their own unique form of waste disposal is when you feel a warm breath on your bottom and hear a couple of satisfied grunts," says Jez Roberts, an intrepid traveller and cameraman who braved all manner of dangers to take these snaps of shit-snorting pigs being used as walking waste-disposal units. "It is, understandably, a shocking experience," Jez adds, rather unnecessarily in our opinion. No wonder most Indians are largely vegetarian, if that's how they fatten up their porkers.



THERE'S A *Stripper*

AT THE PUB
IT TURNS OUT SHE'S YOUR MUM





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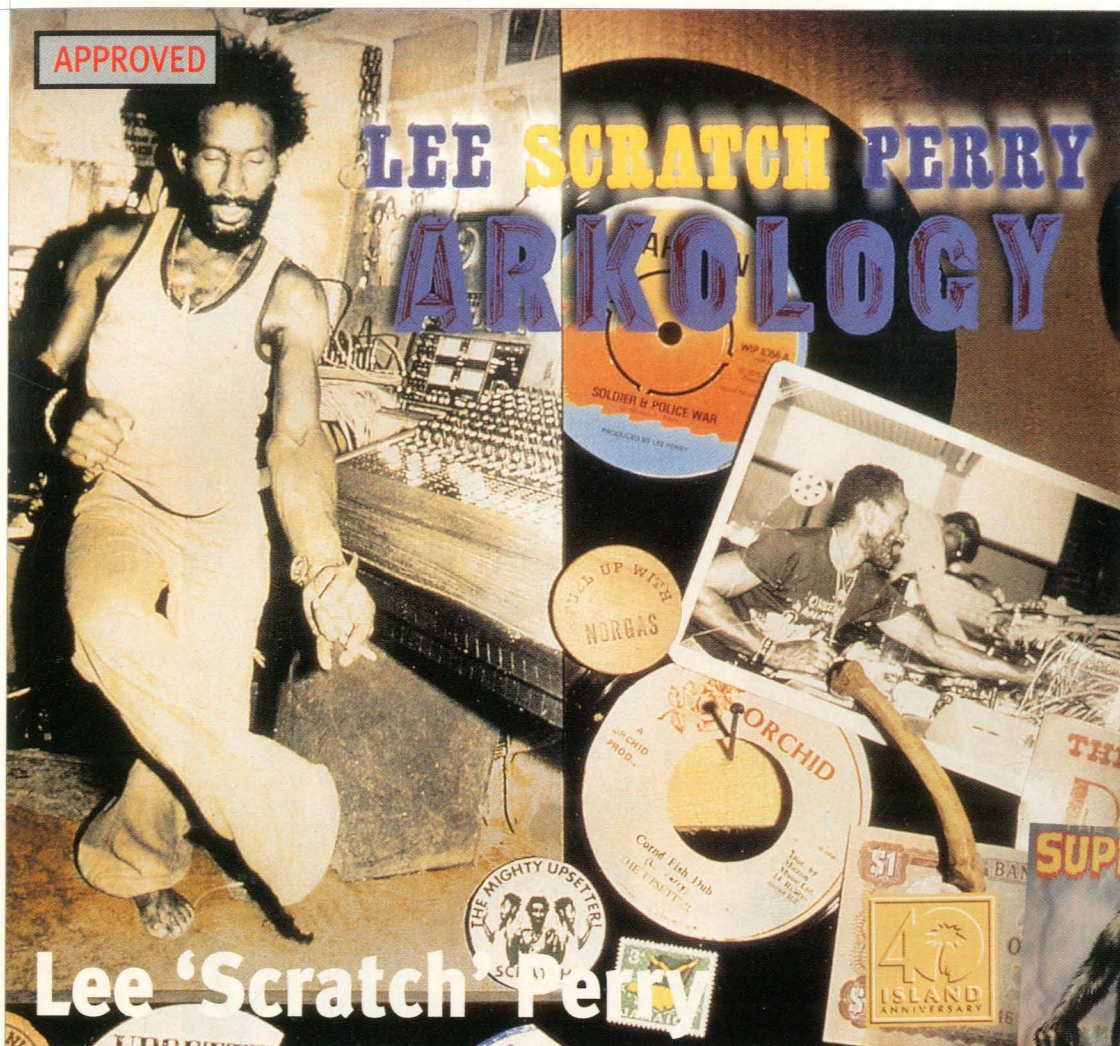
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BIZARRE STORIES



Lee 'Scratch' Perry

He's the Upsetter, worked with Marley and the Clash, and uses the line between genius and madness as a tightrope

LEE 'SCRATCH' PERRY can be found 'upsetting' the most boring record collections, having produced artists as far apart as Bob Marley and Simply Red. Many people credit him as the originator of the reggae beat. He has mentored dub producers Adrian Sherwood and the Mad Professor, and attracted the attention of bands as diverse as the Clash, the Woodentops and the Beastie Boys. And almost everyone thinks he's a strange fish.

There are good reasons for this. In 1979 'Scratch' set fire to his Black Ark recording studio in Kingston, Jamaica. He was discovered sitting in the burnt-out ruins, scrawling what most commentators politely describe as 'cryptic' graffiti over every available surface. An *NME* journalist who visited the next month claimed she found Scratch eating money and worshipping bananas. Some might say that he was not in possession of a fully sliced loaf.

There are many possible causes for this brainstorm – the atmosphere at Black Ark had become increasingly hectic as more dreadlocked hangers-on arrived and more and more ganja and rum were consumed. Earlier that year Scratch's wife had taken their children and left him and, perhaps more significantly, he'd produced a record for Linda McCartney, who he called "fucking very good!" He has never been quite the same.

In the 1980s Scratch bumbled between New York, Amsterdam, Kingston and London. He took to wearing clothes adorned with broken glass, mirrors and CDs, and wearing his sanity on his

sleeve. He worked with some very odd people – Zodiac Mindwarp, need we say more – and made pronouncements that the average lunatic can only aspire to.



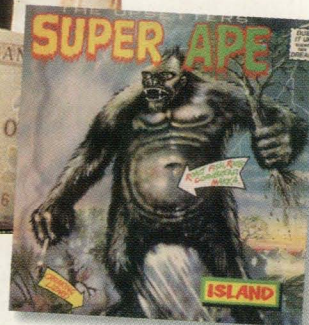
"Shake my cock and lightning flash"

He had a well-documented run-in with Chris Blackwell, boss of Island Records, when he accused the man of being a "vampire", responsible for Bob Marley's death. Given that he had reportedly developed a taste for bottles of petrol and black, not to mention urine, his work in this period was not likely to be too serious. But it was Scratch's music which brought him into the public eye and for which he will be remembered long after his antics have been forgotten.

The music he produced in the Black Ark days and before is utterly ground-breaking. He was the first to use sound effects like glass-shattering and babies crying, and blew Ganja smoke onto master tapes or buried them to create rougher sounds. He innovated in ways which modern sound engineers can still only guess at. With only an empty washing up liquid bottle and a roll of sellotape he created the deepest bass and most scything hi-hats known to man. But Scratch would have us believe that he is no mere mortal. "When my sweet prick piss, rain come. Shake my cock and lightning flash. Fart, and thunder roll."

Rampant egoism is a constant in his conversations with journalists. He puns, riddles and rhymes, giving 'innerviews' not interviews, scattering his answers with quasi-philosophical, religious and pop-cultural references. Over his 61

years he has acquired a multitude of titles – some taken from his work, like The Upsetter, Super Ape and Scratch, others inspired by his ego, such as Gabriel the

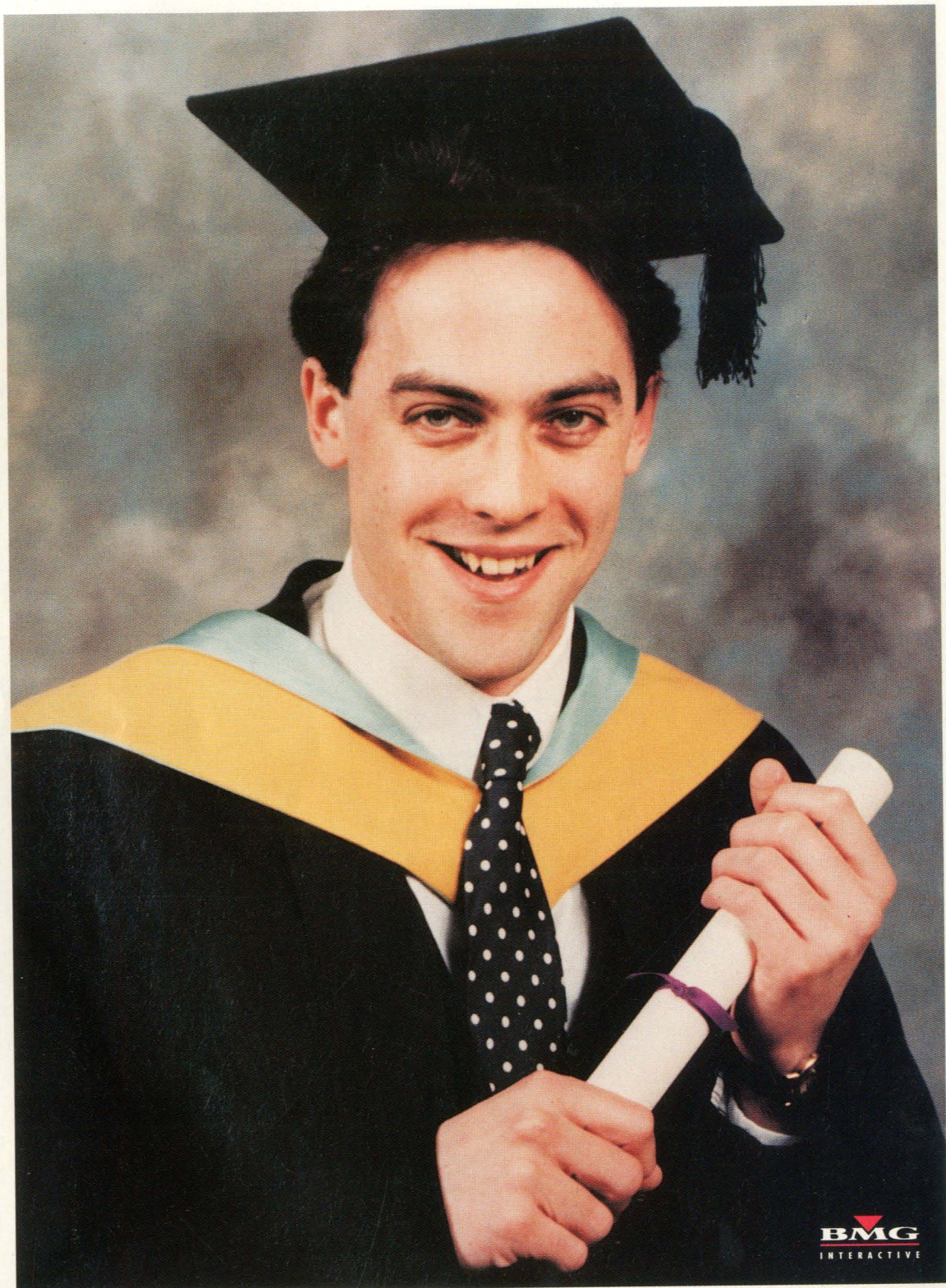


Archangel, President Abraham Perry and Pipecock Jackson. Words have always been playthings for Scratch, from his lyrical associations of sex with food – 'Roast Duck', 'Open Up (Cook Book)' – to the punning-games he used to enjoy with Bob Marley.

Surrounded by a ganja mist of confusion, Scratch is more myth than man. Living with his wife and manager Mireille in her home country of Switzerland, he is now far away from those who seek the answer to the enduring question – is he truly a twisted melon or merely an arch media manipulator? He has certainly made a tidy sum from his life's work and is astute in his dealings with record companies. He has even given the occasional fairly straight interview, though the donning of full bishoply get-up and statements like "Not all aliens are from outer space" might suggest otherwise. Long may he keep us all guessing.

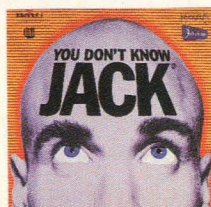
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BIZARRE STORIES

Advances in Egyptology



This man has had his internal organs removed, been buried in natron for 35 days, and then had his brain removed through his nose. Now he's having bandages glued to his body with tree resin. This is what happens when you leave your body to science.

Mummy dearest

Fancy being mummified after you die? Science is rediscovering the secrets of how the Egyptians did it

IN 1994, a 76-year-old Baltimore man known only as Mr M became the first person to be mummified for 2000 years. He'd left his body to science, and when he died of heart failure two American scholars pounced on him to learn how the Egyptians preserved their dead. Although many Egyptian mummies have been unwrapped and X-rayed, the details of their embalming are still unknown.

Like Rameses the Great, a bigshot Egyptian ruler who died in 1225 BC, Mr M's embalming was carried out with reverence. He was anointed with oils and spices, and wrapped in linen shrouds decorated with hieroglyphics. Whereas Rameses had Anubis, Egyptian god of the dead, watching as he was prepared, Mr M was watched over by Bob Brier and Ronald Wade from the University of Maryland. "We pierced together all the clues until we finally came up with a likely answer... just like a detective story," they said.

The only surviving record of an embalming was written by the Greek historian Herodotus who visited Egypt around 450BC and graphically described the ritual stone knives, unguents and lotions used. A stone from Southend beach clearly wouldn't do, so Brier went to Arizona to find a man who

could shape a surgical knife from obsidian (black glass-like volcanic lava), then on to Egypt to gather oils, spices, linen and 600 pounds of natron, a salt-like stuff used by Egyptians to dehydrate and preserve bodies.

In May 1994, they brought out the body and started hacking. The obsidian stone was used to make a five-inch incision in the abdomen. "With the exception of the heart, all the organs were removed and placed in jars," said Brier.

The next part of the process is something we can practise while

still alive – swilling out the guts with wine. Not Blue Nun though: tradition demands sweet-smelling palm wine. The cavities were rinsed out with it, myrrh and frankincense, then packed with bags of natron to dry the corpse.

Then came the stomach-churning part: removing the brain through the nose. Brier and Wade tried Herodotus's version, using a thin bronze needle like a crochet hook to fish out the brain bit by bit through the nostrils. This turned out to be a piss-poor technique. Instead, the two scholars used their hooks to pulverise the brain, squirted in water, then turned the body over to allow the mush to drain out of the nostrils.

Then they had to recreate the temperature and atmosphere of Egypt as closely as possible. Wade talks about it as if micro-waving a spud: "The body was covered with 600lbs of natron

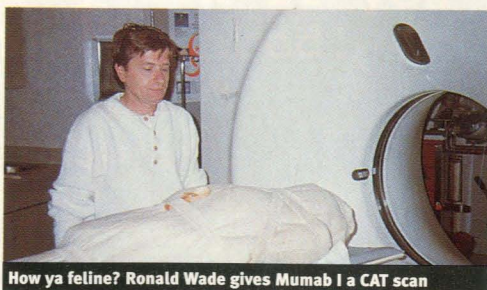
and placed in a special room heated to 46 degrees C (115 degrees F)." It was then left to dry for 35 days. Mr M, now considerably darker, was at last a mummy and renamed 'Mumab I' before being

wrapped; 'Geoff', they felt, did not have an authentic Egyptian ring to it.

Every bit of the body, including individual toes and fingers, was rubbed with a traditional mixture of five oils and swathed in linen bandages, glued together with tree resin. After it had lain in its heated 'tomb' for five months, Wade and Brier then removed tissue samples to check for signs of bacteria.

After they made sure no decay was taking place, it was time for the final wrapping, which took several days. While a pharaoh would have been placed in a sealed sarcophagus, Mumab I was entombed in an airtight shipping box with (for the sake of tradition) jars containing his organs.

Wade believes the mummy could be preserved for a thousand years but says he will be content to have it around for ten. "There is still a lot we can learn from the mummy," he says, "and if it shows signs of decay we may have to go back to the drawing board."



How ya feline? Ronald Wade gives Mumab I a CAT scan



M pieces: the mummy's organs are removed and put in jars

BIZARRE STORIES

HOW TO FAKE... Photographs



The Cottingley fairies: hard to believe the creator of Sherlock Holmes thought this blatant forgery was the real thing, eh?

Whoever said "The camera never lies" was talking out of their arse

FROM THE FIRST moment that someone coated paper with silver nitrate and shot shadow-patterns of leaves, people have been using photography to fool other people. In fact the camera lies so often it's amazing anyone still believes that photographs ever show the truth.

A lot of people assume that to meddle with pictures you're going to need thousands of quids-worth of camera gear, a dark room and an understanding of what an f-stop is. That's not true. Thanks to modern technology all it takes is thousands of quids-worth of computer gear instead. The secret is programs called 'image manipulators' or 'paint packages' such as Adobe Photoshop. In a nutshell, a program like Photoshop lets you take any picture and play with it. You

can add new things to it. You can take things away. You can stretch or shrink parts of it, mix two pics, change colours, blur it, swap bits around and generally go wild.

If you want to see Photoshop's work, check out the pic of the week

on the **BIZARRE** web-site – usually a picture where some sad fan has added a star's face to a

porno image. With Photoshop they can resize the face, make sure the skin-tones match, erase cut-lines, even create fake shadows. Some are cack-handed, but others are good enough to fool the papers.

The potential for faking paranormal pics is obvious. But people have been doing that all century.

Some sad fan has added a star's face to a porno image

The most famous case was the Cottingley fairies: in 1917 two girls claimed they saw fairies, and took photos to 'prove' it. Eminent figures including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes's creator) were taken in. In 1981, the girls –

now very old – admitted they'd traced the fairies from a book. Nowadays, it's bloody obvious

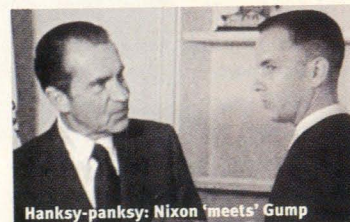
the pics are fakes. In 1917, though, people still trusted the camera.

What about the most famous picture of the Loch Ness Monster – the long-neck shot known as the 'surgeon's photograph'? No clever trickery there: a modified clockwork toy submarine with an attached Nessie was all that was needed. More recently, in the 1970s a monster-hunter called Frank Searle produced a series of amazing Nessie pictures – amazing, that is, until you compared the 'monster' to a picture of a brontosaurus from a well-known postcard.

These days you can still fool the gullible and make a bob or two with a well-faked photograph of the paranormal. But the real money now is in touching up photos that people don't expect to be changed. There was a big fuss the day after this year's Budget, when the *Guardian* printed a picture of the Chancellor in Downing Street – but used Photoshop to remove a figure from behind him.

The first tabloid use of digital photo-manipulation came in the 1980s, when the computer gear to do it cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. Up to then it had been possible to alter pictures in the darkroom or with careful airbrush work, but that was time-consuming. The *Daily Mirror* spent a huge amount of money on a digital system. The first enhanced picture the *Mirror* printed was of a meeting between Gorbachov and Robert Maxwell. They'd had a very boozy lunch, and the ludicrously expensive computer system was brought in to rub out all the empty glasses in front of the two men.

They can even do it with movies these days – think of the historical scenes in *Forrest Gump*, or Bill Clinton's speech about aliens in *Contact*. Although it's incredibly costly and time-consuming now, you can bet that in 10 or 15 years you'll be able to use your home computer to make Tony Blair sing songs praising Thatcherism. If he doesn't do it anyway, that is.



Hanky-panksy: Nixon 'meets' Gump

Quick'n'dirty faking tricks

Double exposure: The oldest trick in the book, particularly for ghost pics. A bit obvious these days. Use a tripod.

"No, Dougal...": If you get the focus right, a small object close to the camera can look like a large object far away. Just make sure the shadows are right.

Stick image to pane of glass: Make picture of flying thing (UFO, pterodactyl, etc.) Stick to pane of glass. Take pic. Bingo.

Fuzz/unfocus/wobble: A nice blur can obscure details that could give away the fact that your picture's not 100% kosher. It also makes you look like an amateur, which helps your credibility.

Claim a picture of something is something else: People want to believe that pictures are real. If you say you snapped something in Loch Ness, people will try to see a monster in it, not a duck.

Hang it on a string: If you must, UFO nerd.

Spend money on special effects: If you've got time and budget, get in someone to make you some decent props.

A button and some dark-room trickery



Budget fudge: that 'conjuring trick' headline didn't mean the disappearing person in the pic





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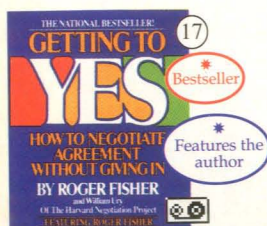


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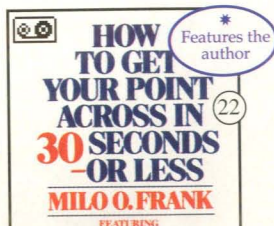
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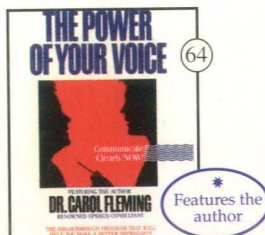
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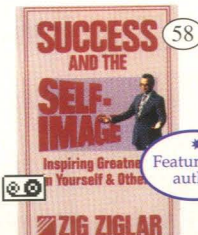
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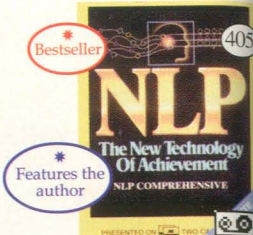
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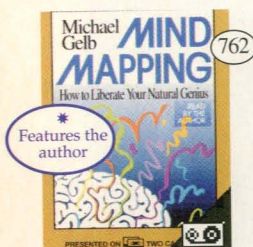
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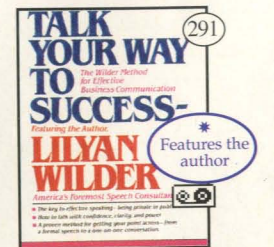
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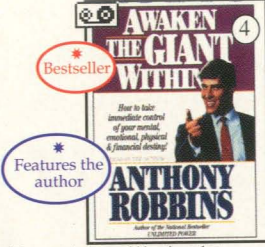


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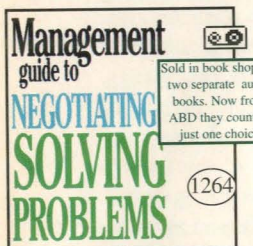


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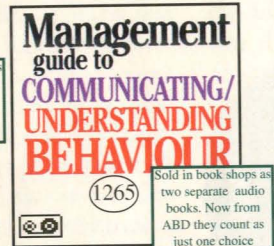
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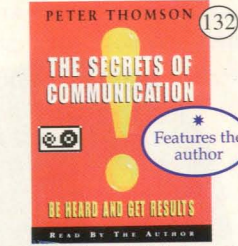
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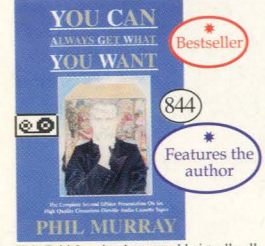
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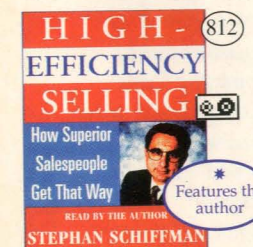
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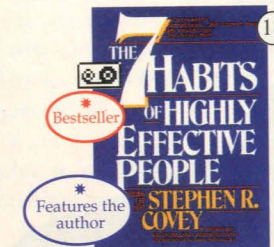
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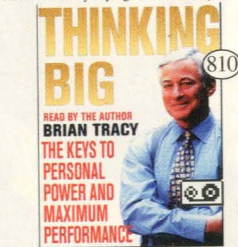
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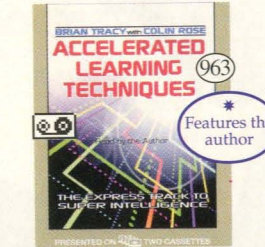
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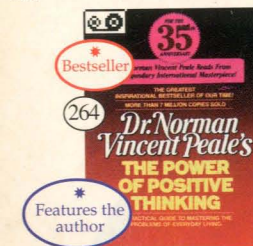
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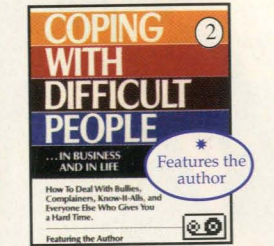
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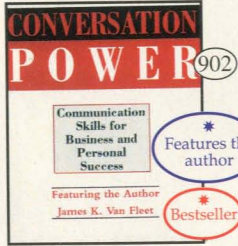
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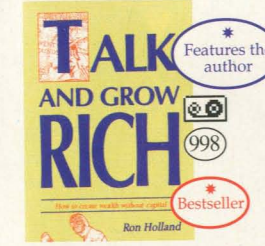
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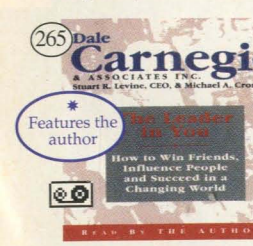
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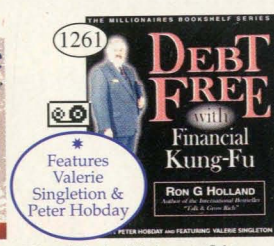
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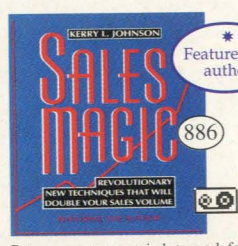
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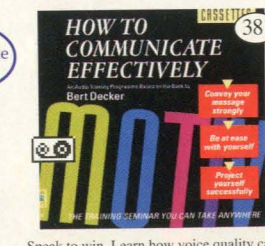
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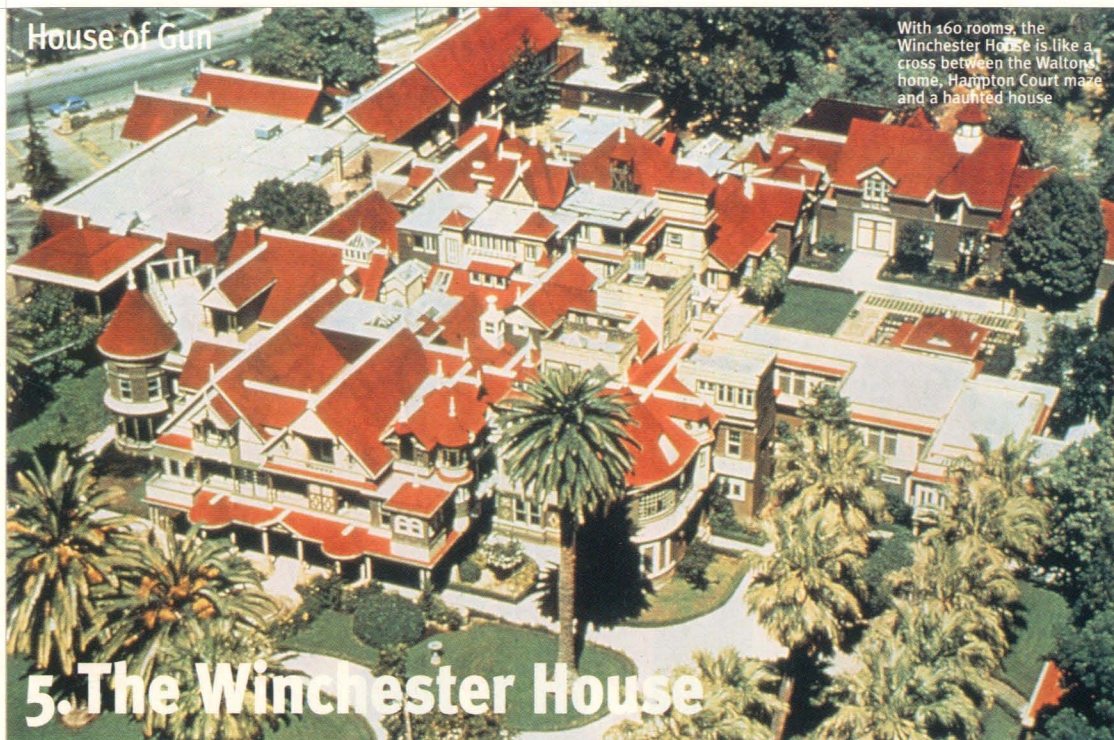
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BIZARRE STORIES

House of Gun



With 160 rooms, the Winchester House is like a cross between the Walton's home, Hampton Court maze and a haunted house

5. The Winchester House

Stairs that lead nowhere, doors on blank walls – and a million unquiet souls

IF YOU'RE PASSING through San Jose, California, and plan on visiting the Winchester House Museum, leave plenty of time. Once inside it may be hard to find your way out through the house's 2000 doors. Built by a rich, eccentric widow, by the end of her life even her servants needed maps to find their way around the sprawling property.

The house was built on the instructions of Sarah L. Winchester, daughter of the man who had invented the Winchester repeating rifle (known as 'the gun that won the West'). Sarah's only child, Annie, died at the age of one month. Fifteen years later, in 1881, her husband William died of pulmonary tuberculosis. Sarah began to think that the family was cursed, and consulted the local medium.

The medium affirmed her fears – and came up with a way of making up for her family's sins: "There's a curse on you but there's a way out. Buy a house in the West and build more rooms, that way could lead to eternal life." History does not record what the point of all the DIY would be, but legend suggests that the house had to be extended to make room for all the souls of people shot by her dad's guns – and since the only thing winning the game of cowboys'n'indians

was the Winchester rifle, there had to be a steady supply of new rooms for the ghosts to inhabit.

So in 1884 Sarah bought an eight-room ranch house in San Jose, and for the next 38 years had up to 22 builders working around the clock expanding it, at a cost of \$5 million. When she finally

There had to be a steady supply of new rooms for the ghosts

popped her clogs in 1922, at the age of 82, the original building was unrecognisable. Sarah had expanded it to seven storeys in places, and added an extra 152 rooms, six of them kitchens. She acted as architect, which may explain why many doors and windows open onto brick walls. She didn't even draw up proper plans – she'd sketch diagrams on napkins and table cloths,

and give them to the builders, who were continually being told to remodel or tear down what they had already built. Legends say she may have been trying to confuse the evil spirits by constantly changing the building's shape.

The workmen also built secret passageways and doors opening onto sudden drops – her 20 or so servants must have read their maps very carefully. Many of the lintels were deceptively low – at 4' 10", Sarah could walk around without a

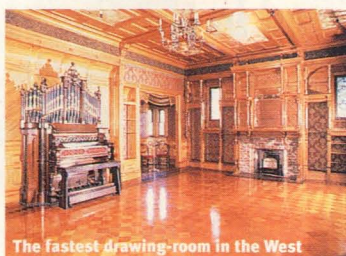
care but average-sized people risked a nasty bump.

As well as 2000 doors, the house – which now covered six acres – had 10,000 windows, not to mention 40 staircases, each with 13 steps. Sarah had a thing about the number 13. Many rooms have 13 windows and 13 panels on their ceilings. She had special chandeliers constructed with 13 branches and even had 13 bathtubs installed.

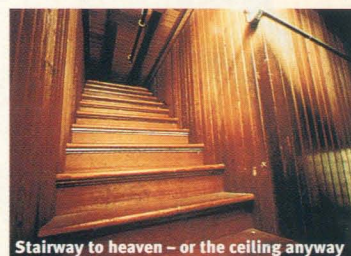
Towards the end of her life, Sarah Winchester became a complete recluse. The only surviving picture of her was snapped in secret by one of the army of gardeners who maintained the 161-acre estate. During her last years no one but her butler was allowed to see her.

Was Sarah a weird eccentric, or genuinely haunted? Well, despite its reputation as the most haunted house in the West, very few people claim to have seen anything funny going on in the Winchester mansion, neither while the house was being built nor since it was turned into a museum after her death.

The Winchester House is at 525 South Winchester Blvd, San Jose, California 95128, USA. Tel 001 408 247 2000, fax 001 408 247 2090. The tour costs \$12.95 and takes about three hours, including a look in 110 of the 160 rooms. It's open every day except Christmas Day, but fax ahead for times as they vary from month to month.



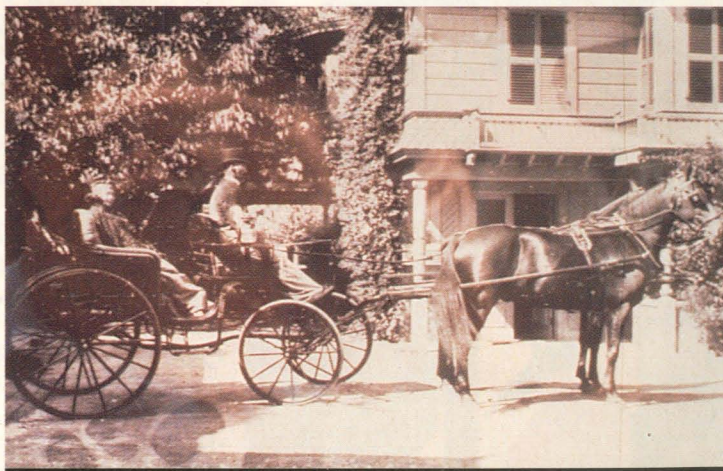
The fastest drawing-room in the West



Stairway to heaven – or the ceiling anyway



Tallow dolly: waxwork of Sarah Winchester



The last photo of Sarah Winchester, snapped in secret by a gardener. Bloody paparazzi!

Michelle Yeoh



Chingmy Yau



Hong Kong cinema is the most over-the-top, least restrained in the world, and its equivalent of an 'X' puts the West to shame. JIM McCLENNAN finds out what puts the 'gory' into 'Category III'

CARRIE NG



NOT SO LONG AGO, names like John Woo and Chow Yun-Fat were known only to a few cinema snobs and fans of ultraviolent movies, but that was before the recent explosion of interest in Hong Kong cinema. Now the shelves of any self-respecting video store groan under the weight of tapes from HK, and a good percentage of them are labelled Category III. But what does this mean? Who's making the films? And will Sir need a brown paper bag for them?

Looking at the covers of films like *Naked Killer*, showing top chop-socky babe Chingmy Yau wrapped, naked, around the equally sexy Carrie Ng, who's dressed in a man's suit, and the slogan "There are two things on their mind... one's killing!" then you might think so. And if the number of violent sex scenes in the likes of *Robotrix* and *Naked Killer II* is anything to go by, you may want to hide them at the back of

your video shelves. Both feature the kind of artfully filmed rape sequences that would get anti-smut campaigners up in arms – if they knew.

The Hong Kong cinema industry is a flexible and reactive beast – as the phenomenally successful *Naked Killer* demonstrated, if a film's a hit, two sequels will arrive before the year is out, alongside innumerable imitations. This also applies to foreign trends, which are mercilessly replicated with just sufficient spin to give them local relevance in the Far Eastern market.

That's how Category III films started. At the end of the 1980s, a number of directors pushed Hong Kong's censorship envelope a little further, and Category III was born: an adults-only rating that permitted more graphic sex and violence than ever before.

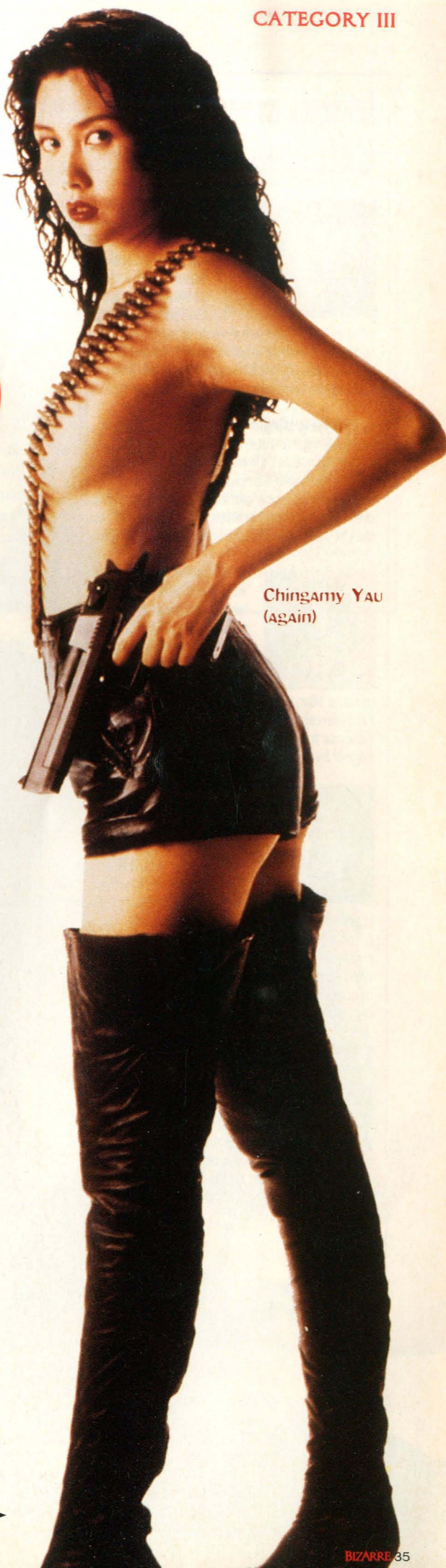
It wasn't the first time the Hong Kong industry had discovered exploitation film-making;

"NOODLES?
FORGET IT!
TRY MY FIST!"

URe



Chow Yun-Fat in *Hard Boiled*: in Hong Kong films the male stars shoot their load, one way or another



Chingmy Yau (again)

back in the mid-1970s, the massive worldwide success of *Emmanuelle* led to a slew of soft-porn movies with titles like *Oriental Playgirls* and *The Story of Susan*. But the one recent Hollywood movie that has inspired more Category III than any other is *Basic Instinct*, containing as it does the three 'S's which characterise the rating: sex, splatter and style. If you haven't seen a Category III film, *Basic Instinct* comes close to capturing the heady mix of blood-spattered sensuality typical to the genre, which Jonathan Ross recently described as follows: "The whole idea of sexy Chinese girls wearing tight superhero type costumes, fighting and then having sex, is possibly the finest development in the hundred years of cinema history a man could possibly hope for. There's absolutely nothing in these movies that I find anything but joyful."

Talk of a 'genre' is actually misleading; the films vary widely in content. It's one of the delights of Hong Kong cinema that while over here the word 'erotic' is almost inevitably followed by 'thriller' (and then by 'starring Shannon Tweed'), Category III has produced films we would categorise as horror, SF, period drama, comedy...

This is because Category III is simply a rating, like '18', and it's important to remember that films with the label may not always be what you expect. A movie may be placed in Category III because of language, political content or because it deals with sensitive subjects: art-house darling Wong Kar-Wai's latest film *Happy Together* deals with homosexuality, and is therefore classified as CIII. But in the West we tend to think of 'Category III' as meaning exploitation flicks which, when you

If you only watch five Category III movies...



1. Sex and Zen

Based on centuries-old erotic classic *The Carnal Prayer Mat*, it's classy pornography disguised as moral education.

Everyone ends up dead, mad or very, very sorry – and getting a penis transplant from a horse is just asking for trouble. With no coupling combination left untried, Amy Yip's finest moment is our number one choice.

2. The Holy Virgin Versus the Evil Dead

Not just a great title, but a demo of the variety to be found in Cat III films: sex, gore and fantasy, as martial arts star Donnie Yen seeks a supernatural killer. Two versions were filmed: in one, the babes are naked (for no obvious reason); in the other they're not. Happily, the former was released here.



3. Naked Killer

Naked Killer is perhaps the best introduction to the field of Category III films. Multiple starlets, jaw-dropping action and a plot that might fall apart if examined too closely, it

made a star out of innocent-looking Chingamy Yau. Beware the sequel if you're squeamish about violence towards women – it was originally titled *Raped by an Angel*.



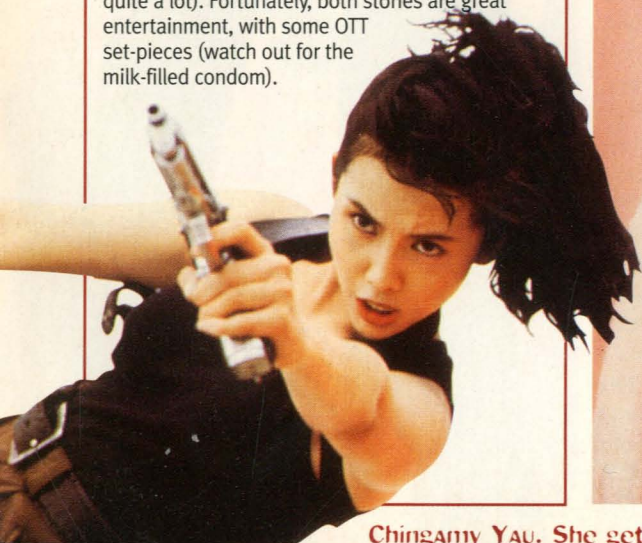
4. Robotrix

Virtually unique, this sci-fi action sex comedy is *Robocop* with extra flesh and less budget: a woman police officer's brain

is transferred into an android body in order to catch another, male robot with a psychopathic streak who's fond of screwing women to death. With Amy Yip again, as a third android who becomes a hooker in order to experience sex. Jaw-droppingly odd, even without the Cat III elements.

5. Deadly China Dolls

An unsubtle but scarcely inaccurate retitling of *Lethal Panther*. It feels like two movies joined at the hip: while the CIA investigate forged money, a hit-woman suffers angst over her career (inevitably this doesn't put her off having sex quite a lot). Fortunately, both stories are great entertainment, with some OTT set-pieces (watch out for the milk-filled condom).

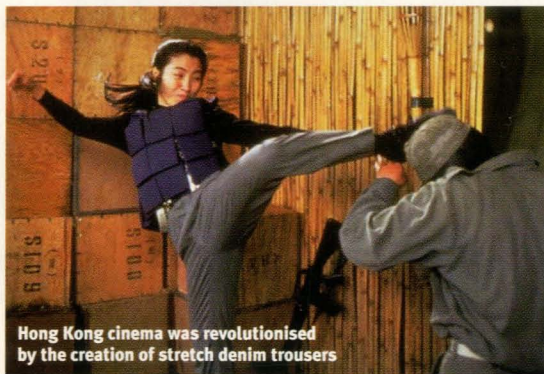


Chingamy YAU. She gets AROUND

think of the Category III films the distributors have released over here, is hardly surprising.

The appeal of Category III films in the West centres around the long list of attractive women who appear in them, and the casual oriental attitude to mixing sex and violence. Many films revolve around female characters, most of whom get into beautifully choreographed fights with other women. This is a common feature of Hong Kong cinema: a film like *Moon Warriors*, includes a good and bad babe-with-a-sword (in this case the gorgeous Maggie Cheung vs the sultry Anita Mui).

Unlike many women in the East, women in Category III movies tend to be outspoken sexually (comedy nympho characters, lesbians and bisexuals abound), which adds to their appeal over here. What's more, there are far more major roles for aggressive gun-toting heroines and villainesses than in Hollywood movies, and they tend to be more interesting roles as well. The pay scales aren't up to Hollywood levels, though they're getting there for the major stars: box-office favourite Michelle Yeoh (soon to be seen as a Bond girl) earned £3.5 million in 1993.



Hong Kong cinema was revolutionised by the creation of stretch denim trousers

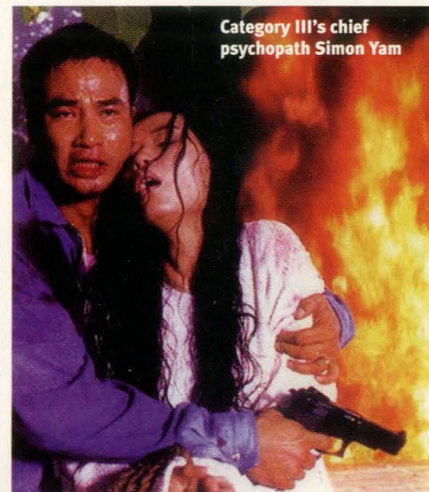


I hope you warmed those first: Amy Yip in *Sex & Zen*

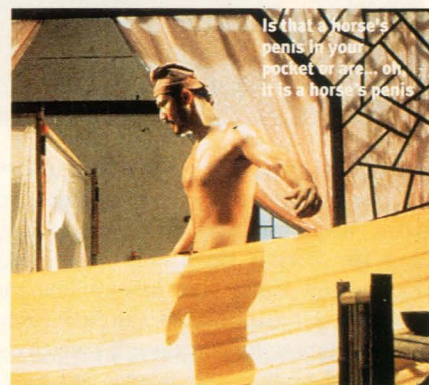
Take a film like *Naked Killer*, which crosses *Basic Instinct* with *Nikita*, to good effect. A teenage girl is rescued from certain death by an assassin-ess who becomes her mentor; however, an earlier protégée and her cute young plaything come to town aiming to become #1 with a bullet. (Several bullets, in fact.) Bizarrely, this lesbian action film throws comedy into the mix, too, with jokes about willies and a heterosexual love interest in the shape of a policeman who can't draw his gun without puking.

This is the joy of Category III films: *anything* can happen. Sure, they might be cheap and they might make little sense, but you never can be sure what'll happen next, and in a world of increasingly predictable Hollywood fare, this is an important factor in their appeal. Of course, Hong Kong studios also make the best action movies in the world; plus they employ actresses for no other reason than their incredible looks. Beauty pageants are a major source of talent.

There's little stigma attached to appearing in Category III films in Hong Kong. *Sex & Zen* took HK\$18m at the cinema: in Hollywood terms, that's roughly equivalent to a \$100 million



Category III's chief psychopath Simon Yam



Is that a horse's penis in your pocket or are... oh, it's a horse's penis



Naked Killer: sexy wet death

movie — and it also went to #1 in the Italian box-office charts.

The British censors have been notably less enthusiastic. The clunkily titled *Escape From Brothel* lost eight minutes for its UK release, including much naked kung-fu and a notorious sequence in which the two leading starlets are forced to violate each other with baseball bats. Even the comparatively arty *Sex & Zen* ended up four minutes shorter.

The problem is the combination of sex and violence, especially in 'roughies' like *Escape*: any hint of S&M or coercion and the scissors come out. Avoid those subjects and you're safe from the snip — unless you use nunchakas. Chief censor James Furman really hates them, and even cut one scene in which a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle swung a string of sausages in a similar manner.

Stars and directors can move freely between Category III and mainstream cinema in a manner unknown in the West. Wong Jing, the ultra-commercial director responsible for eye-popping productions such as *A Chinese Torture Chamber Story*, has also worked with the biggest HK stars including Jackie Chan. His success has been

The top five films not available here (ever, probably)

1. Man Behind the Sun

A historically accurate portrayal of the atrocities carried out in the name of science during the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. It's utterly harrowing, because it spends half an hour establishing the characters before subjecting them to appalling treatment. A salutary monument to incidents that remain all but ignored in the West.

2. The Story of Ricky

Based on Japanese animation, this is splatter-fu at its most excessive, as the hero tries to survive in a futuristic prison complex. For example Ricky uses *his own intestines* to strangle a villain. He also punches through walls, and reduces flesh to a bloody pulp with a single blow. This man is hard beyond the dreams of Tyson.

3. Hunting List

When people get shot in this movie, they don't so much bleed as gush. And there's a lot of shooting, as well as a scene stolen straight from *True Romance* — which is a

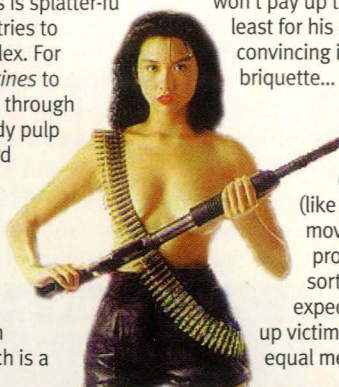
nice response to Quentin Tarantino's lifting of scenes from *City On Fire* for *Reservoir Dogs*. A mostly unknown cast deliver an excellent, gritty urban thriller.

4. Run and Kill

A slow descent into hell, this one. It starts off as a black comedy, with the hero accidentally hiring a hit-man to kill his wife. After 30 minutes you'll be wondering why this is Cat III, but then when he won't pay up things turn decidedly nasty, not least for his daughter who ends up doing a convincing impression of a charcoal briquette...

5. The Ebola Syndrome

Another weird cross-genre classic, mixing the epidemic film (like *Outbreak*) with the serial-killer movie. Needless to say, both provide ample opportunity for the sort of gory scenes that you'd expect, with Anthony Wong chewing up victims and the scenery in roughly equal measure.



Amy Yip

Aoyama Chikako

"YOU BASTARD!
TRY THIS
MELON!"

achieved despite a fondness for directing several films simultaneously; as he says, "If you can make two dollars, why make one?"

However, actresses who do nudity can find it hard to shake off the reputation. While Oscar-winners like Jodie Foster

and Meryl Streep shed their clothes for

'artistic reasons', Hong Kong cinema buffs don't make any distinction between

'necessary to the plot' and 'keeping the punters interested'. This

odd streak of puritanism goes some way to

explaining the ephemeral nature of many Category III starlets. Certain film-makers have a

reputation for treating their actresses like a personal harem, so you'll see a startling beauty

once, then never hear from her again because she's been swept away by some mogul. This also

happens to respectable actresses such as Michelle Yeoh, who

married industrialist Dickson Poon and disappeared from the screen for several years.

Looming above all the other big names of Hong Kong cinema, in more ways than one, is

Amy Yip, often thought of as the Orient's very own Pamela Anderson – for the same two

reasons. Though some of Hong Kong cinema's big names remain unimpressed –

Jackie Chan described her as "the ugliest woman I've ever

seen" – the bountifully endowed Yip has carved out a career across a broad spectrum of media.

Most remarkably, she has never taken her top off to reveal her biggest assets. This modesty

brought her unwelcome attention from Triad

gangs, who spotted the potential of a movie in which she fully exposed her charms, regardless of whether she wanted to. Yip went to the

media, and the fuss apparently scared the gangsters off, though unsubstantiated rumours persist

that it may just have been a publicity stunt. If Amy Yip is queen of Category III films, the king's crown is

shared by suave sophisticate Simon Yam and Anthony

Wong, who specialises in playing thugs. Both cemented their reputations by portraying

demented serial killers in lurid movies: *Doctor Lamb* and *The Untold Story* respectively. Wong won the Hong Kong equivalent of an Oscar

for his performance, and appears in non-Category III films such as *Heroic Trio*.

"When I was in school, nobody wanted to play with me," he laments, though watching some of his roles you can

understand why. Yam, the son of a top HK policeman, has also moved smoothly between

exploitation and the mainstream. His characters tend to be of questionable sanity whatever type of film he appears in.

What are the prospects for Amy, Simon, Anthony and the rest of Hong Kong's cinema industry, post-1997? Some have

relocated to Vancouver. Several major Hong Kong stars and directors appear to be turning their attention toward Hollywood,

John Woo, Chow Yun-Fat, Tsui Hark, Michelle Yeoh and Jackie Chan among them. On the other hand, there's no shortage of talent remain-

ing behind, although many stars will be keeping foreign passports to hand in case things get sticky.

From the censorship point of view, things may initially seem bleaker: China is not exactly noted for a liberal arts policy. However when a delegation of film-makers visited Beijing, the chief Chinese negotiator for the hand-over, Lu Ping, said that not only was Category III safe, but that the industry could move on to creating Category IV or even Category V films if they wanted. We'll have to wait to see quite what extremes such theoretical categories might embrace, but it seems the potential is there for Hong Kong cinema to move into everything from hardcore porn to near-snuff movies.

"TAKE MY ADVICE OR I'LL SPANK YOU WITHOUT PANTS!"



Amy Yip: talent to the fore



"Men are somehow abnormal"

Chop-socky movies: we love 'em. Not only are they sexy and violent, they feature some of the craziest subtitles ever. Mind you, with films called things like Pom Pom And Hot Hot, what can you expect?

Love is in the air

"From your tiny eyes, I can tell you won't be lazy in bed" (*Holy Weapon*)

"Don't do anything perverted, we are in a hurry" (*Holy Weapon*)

"The tongue is so ugly. Let's imagine it to be Tom Cruise" (*My Neighbours are Phantoms*)

"It'll be bad if we become top gigolos. We'll be tortured every day" (*Pom Pom and Hot Hot*)

Is that a threat, asshole?

"Noodles? Forget it! Try my fist!" (*Final Victory*)

"Take my advice, or I'll spank you without pants" (*The Seventh Curse*)

"Beat him out of recognizable shape!" (*Police Story II*)

"You bastard, try this melon!" (*Gunmen*)

"Your dad is an iron worder, your mom sells beans" (*Legend of the Liquid Sword*)

"I'll fire aimlessly if you don't come out!" (*Pom Pom and Hot Hot*)

Surreal or what?

"I'm not Jesus Christ, I'm Bunny" (*Double Trouble*)

"Suck the coffin mushroom now"

(*The Ultimate Vampire*)

"You always use violence. I should've ordered glutinous rice chicken"

(The incredibly badly translated *Pedicab Driver*)

"I won't dump the used napkins anywhere too.

Not to let the vampires use them as tea bags, right?" (*Eternal Evil of Asia*)

Questions better not asked

"How can you use my intestines as a gift?"

(*The Beheaded 1000*)

"How can I make love without TV?"

(*Brother of Darkness*)

"You circumcised me because of my cold. Now my appendix because of my headache?"

(*Doctor Vampire*)

Pauline Chan looking a bit miserable on finding herself in the notorious exploitation flick *Escape From Brothel*



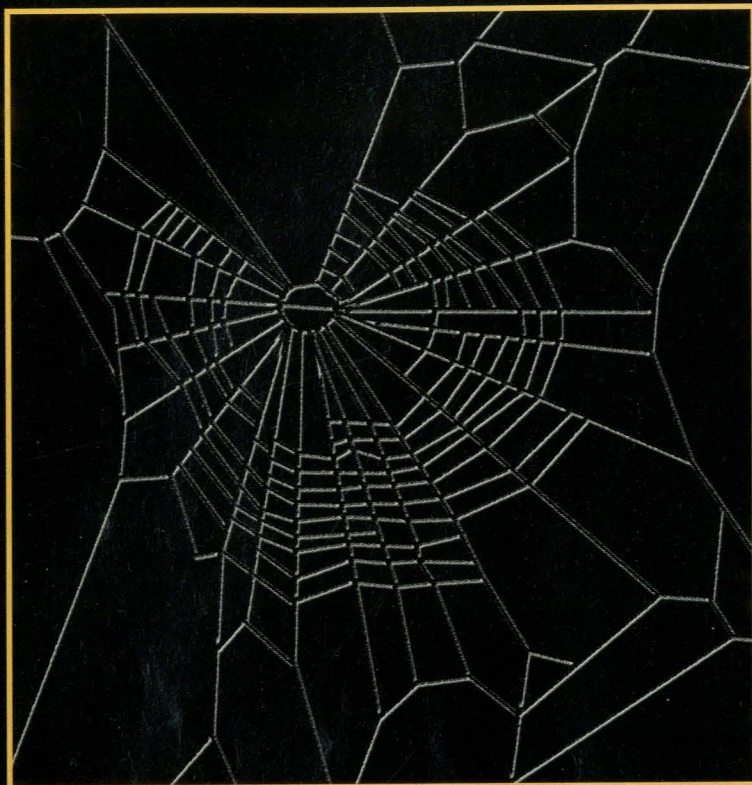
With such hot animated action,
I bet you couldn't
handle a blow from her.



Released Soon on Manga Video.

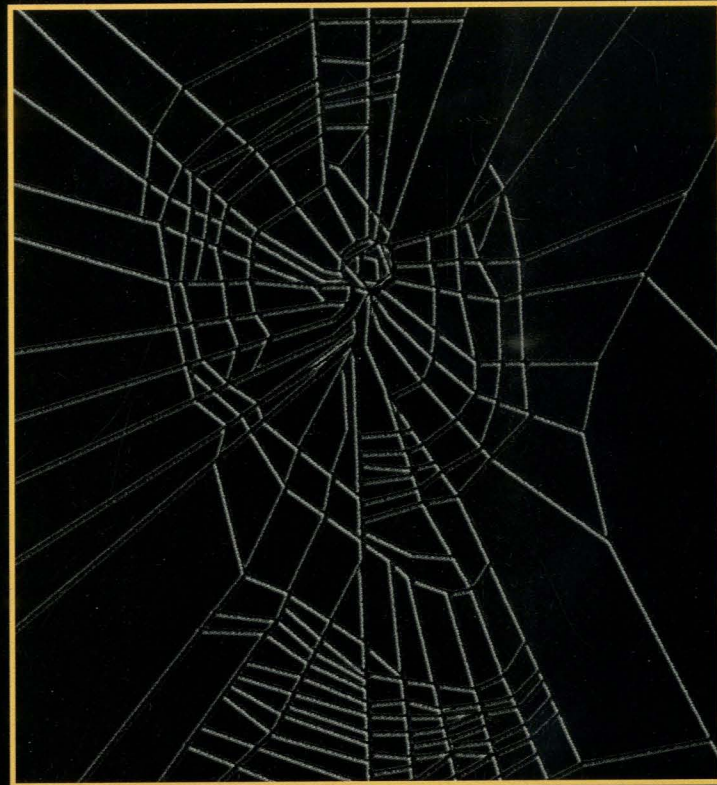
Check out our web site for stockists. www.manga.co.uk/news/index.html

Arachno-dopia



MARIJUANA

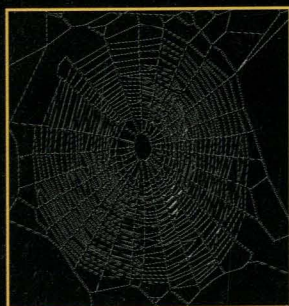
As you can see, not a bad attempt. There are fewer 'spokes' to the web than you would get in a normal spider's web, but plenty of laterals connecting them. In fact a rather excessive number. Observers noted that the spiders started off fine but appeared to lose concentration half-way through.



SPEED

Spiders on speed get weaving like crazy. Well, no surprise there really. They spin their webs "with great gusto" according to the guys in the white coats "but without much planning, leaving large holes". Not much danger to passing flies by the look of the above example.

Why give spiders drugs?



AS LONG ago as 1954 scientists were keen on finding out the effect drugs can have on spiders, because unlike other animals who might just weave around a bit under the influence, they would leave

behind a tangible record of their trip: their web. Now NASA has got in on the act, trying out popular stimulants on ordinary house spiders. Their aim? To create a computer program that can analyse webs to predict whether new drugs are poisonous or not.

From the initial experiments of Peter Witt, the world's greatest web-watcher, a system was developed for tracing minute amounts of hallucinogens in a person's blood or urine. By concentrating the bodily fluid into a tiny amount of solid, then dissolving this in sugary water, a spider can be persuaded to eat it, and the funny web patterns later woven can be compared to

the known patterns for various drugs. In the late 1950s scientists tried to isolate a substance in the blood of schizophrenics that accounted for their hallucinations by feeding its concentrate to spiders. They also gave them the concentrate of catatonic patients. The arachnids responded in both cases by starting lots of rudimentary webs but not finishing them. This behaviour was similar to what spiders do when they're about to moult, so the only conclusion was that there's something in the blood of catatonic schizophrenics that's similar to the body fluids of a moulting spider. Oops.

Reed and Witt, in 1968, gave spiders phenobarbital and diazepam. Strangely the bugs were more affected by phenobarbital and less by diazepam, the opposite of the drugs' effects on humans. Three years earlier they'd had to resort to cutting off spiders' front legs to get them to spin disorganized webs, and discovered that spiders aren't left or right handed (legged?) Cut off either and they're buggered. However, painting over their eyes with black lacquer makes no difference to their weaving!

Why the hell did they bother?

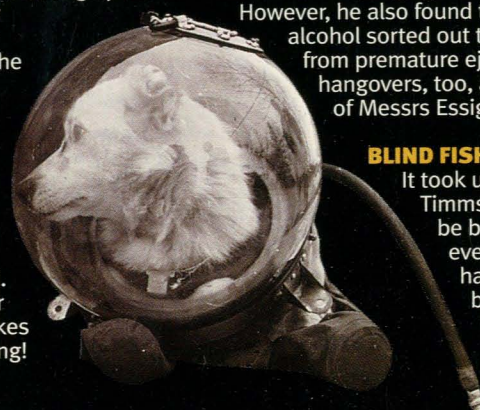
More experiments which advanced the sum of human knowledge (a bit)

DRUNKEN DOGS

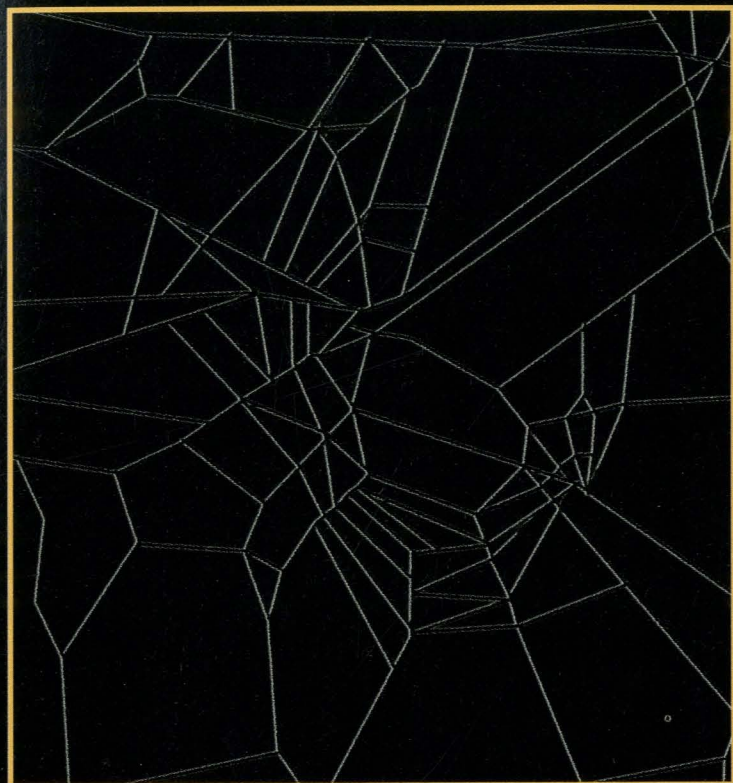
Goldfish are apparently very useful to scientists because alcohol seems to do to them what it does to us. But in the 40s and 50s it looked like dogs would take over as the animals favoured by alcohol researchers. W. H. Gantt discovered that "alcohol has a depressant effect on a dog's sexual reflexes in proportion to its dose" or, in other words, dogs get brewer's droop too. However, he also found that small doses of alcohol sorted out those dogs suffering from premature ejaculation. They get hangovers, too, according to the work of Messrs Essig and Lam (1968).

BLIND FISH

It took until 1976 for A. M. Timms to prove what should be bloody obvious to everyone: a blind goldfish has trouble swimming because it can't see where it's going. By taking lots of fishes



For years, scientists have been spending our hard-earned taxes on vital research like giving drugs to spiders. **BIZARRE** is proud to show you the results of these experiments – and we even try to explain why the boffins bothered



CAFFEINE

Worried about how much coffee you drink? You should be if the above's anything to go by. Caffeine was given to loads of spiders in the 1960s by scientists who thought it would make them stay up and spin webs at night, rather than in the early morning (the spider's preferred spinning hour).

and blinding them in one or both eyes he came to the startling conclusion that only having one eye didn't really affect their ability to swim, but that not being able to see where they were going made them rather more cautious. Early research had already dealt with more pressing matters, like whether goldfish can distinguish between two circles, one of which is 3mm wider than the other. If you're interested, they can.

DROWNED DOGS

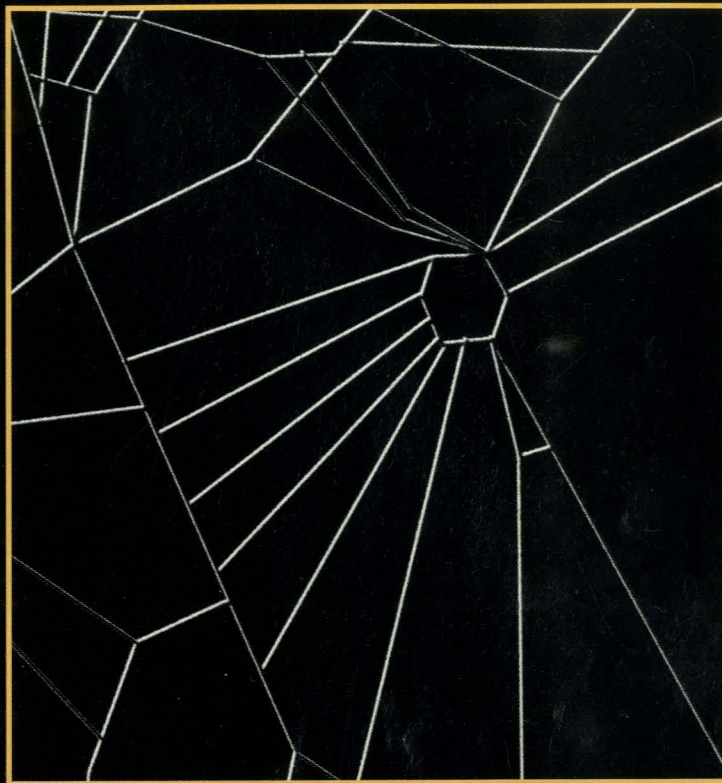
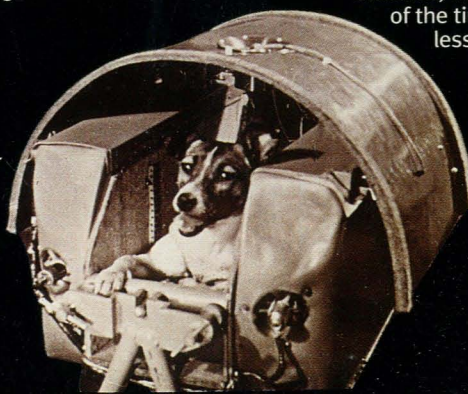
Trying to work out how to bring dead things back to life, the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society of London did hundreds of experiments on dogs. They started off by pushing glass tubes down the dogs' windpipes and seeing what happened when they put a cork in the end. Nine goes later they'd worked out the average amount of time it takes to suffocate a dog. By experiment 19, all carefully recorded, they were putting terriers' heads into buckets of plaster of paris to see whether any of the liquid plaster got into their lungs as they died. Then they started tying dogs to planks to see how long it took them to drown.

Then they got fancy. They took to drowning two canines at the same time – usually tied to the same plank – having used the glass-tube-and-bung procedure on one of the dogs first. Lo and behold, the dog that was suffocating didn't

drown, and outlasted the other by several minutes. Experiments on the dogs' corpses produced no data whatsoever, but seventy dogs later we're sure they had fun.

FRIGHTENED CHICKENS

Scientists have been doing incomprehensible things to chickens for over a century. In 1873 O. Spalding conducted a series of experiments to tell if chicks inherited instinctive behaviour or learned it. He hatched chicks in a flannel bag, then covered some of their heads with hoods or fitted earplugs to others (what does a chicken earmuff look like, we ask). When he removed the devices the chicks seemed to behave just like their unhampered brothers and sisters. All the blindfolded chicks appeared afraid of worms, but ones that had been hooded for three days showed no fear of humans. Chicks kept in a hood until they were four days old were petrified of people. We can understand why.



CHLORAL HYDRATE

Chloral hydrate is the active ingredient in many sleeping pills. Web-spinning under its influence turned out to be a complete washout. The spiders dropped off before they'd really begun. But they look to have been making a start on quite regular-shaped webs before the desire to sleep overtook them.

BRAINGLESS CHICKENS

Spalding worked hard to sort out nature from nurture. Later scientists took it one step further and removed the chicks' brains to see if this made any difference to what they did. Brainless chicks, N. E. Collias was able to conclude in 1950, do not move towards a clucking or retreating object.

SPUNKY COCKS

Following pioneering work by C. W. Upp to establish that chickens like sex in the afternoon, with his best performer getting it on 53 times in one day, Messrs Parker, McKensie and Kempster set out to establish how often cocks come. Having designed a cock-semen collector, they discovered they faked it 14% of the time, and consistently produced less sperm when doing it with hens than the researchers could produce by masturbating the cocks. This was 1942, but it's still legal to play with cocks under scientific conditions. A useful additional conclusion was that cocks will do it in all weathers, unless their comb and wattles snapped off due to freezing.

BERNICE SUMMERFIELD: ARCHAEOLOGIST, ADVENTURER, BARFLY



The King's balls get bigger every year!
OH NO IT ISN'T!

ISBN 0 426 20507 3

The creature had been cybernetically enhanced by someone with lots of high technology but no aesthetic sense at all.

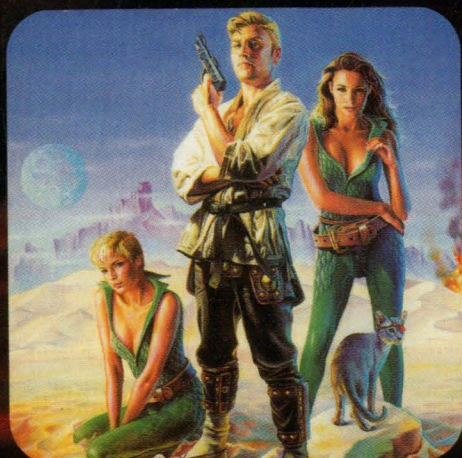
DRAGONS' WRATH

ISBN 0 426 20508 1

Lost alien civilisations do not leave their most dangerous weapons lying around for any nutter to find. Do they?

BEYOND THE SUN

ISBN 0 426 20511 1



If I have any custard, sadomasochism and skankweed orgies, I'll be sure to invite you.

SHIP OF FOOLS

ISBN 0 426 20510 3

The mad were given a continent all to themselves.

DOWN

ISBN 0 426 20512 X

They've awakened something beneath the planet's surface that's feasting on human brains.

DEADFALL

ISBN 0 426 20513 8

In the evening the Factories crawled down the continental shelf to drink.

GHOST DEVICES

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UNDER WRAPS:

The Hairy Woman strips off

Cannibal nuns chow down

Why newspapers lie to you

Torture today

**PLUS: drugs, killer diseases,
hideous mutilations and MORE!**

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Death on the rocks





ON A HILLSIDE, the corpse of a Tibetan Buddhist is given a traditional sky-burial. Tibetans see the human body as just a vessel for the soul, so after death, once the spirit has left, the corpse is useless. The bodies of the dead are taken out to an open area, often behind a temple, where 'tobden' men use special knives to strip the flesh from the bones and dismember the body, leaving the remains for wild birds – usually vultures – to consume. Some traditions say that the birds carry the spirit to heaven, while others trace the idea to a story where Buddha fed birds with flesh from his own body. It may seem barbaric, but in a country where the ground is too hard to bury corpses and there are not enough trees to cremate them, it's an efficient and environmentally friendly way to dispose of the dead.



SCARED? YOU SHOULD BE

MEDIA-GENERATED PANICS IN HISTORY

1885 – VICTORIAN WOMEN LIVE IN FEAR OF BEING CARRIED OFF BY WHITE SLAVE TRADERS

1888 – NEWSPAPERS MAKE JACK THE RIPPER THE MOST FAMOUS SERIAL KILLER EVER

1890s – VILLAGERS LIVE IN FEAR OF HOOLIGAN BICYCLISTS; AND BICYCLISTS LIVE IN FEAR OF DEVELOPING 'BICYCLE HUMP'

1910s – LISTENING TO RAGTIME MUSIC MAKES YOU A NYMPHO, AND ENCOURAGES YOU TO ASSOCIATE WITH UNDESIRABLES

WWI – RUSSIAN ARMIES HAVE LANDED AT HARTLEPOOL; YOU CAN SPOT THEM BY THE SNOW ON THEIR BOOTS

1919 – 800,000 DOGS IN THE HOME COUNTIES MUZZLED DUE TO RABIES SCARES

1920s – JAZZ (SEE RAGTIME)

1937 – REEFER MADNESS SWEEPS THE USA: ONE PUFF AND YOU'RE HOOKED

1956 – ROCK'N'ROLL (SEE JAZZ AND RAGTIME)

1970s – COLORADO BEETLE SET TO RAVAGE BRITAIN'S POTATO CROPS

1970s – RABIES SET TO RAVAGE BRITAIN

1973 – TOILET PAPER SHORTAGE IN THE USA AFTER A JOKE ON THE JOHNNY CARSON SHOW IS BELIEVED BY THE MEDIA

1981 – FIRST MEDIA REPORTS ON AIDS, CONFINED TO GAYS AND DRUG USERS IN SAN FRANCISCO, NEW YORK AND LOS ANGELES

1985 – AIDS HITS THE NEWS IN A BIG WAY WHEN THE FIRST CHILD DIES OF INHERITED AIDS IN THE UK

1988 – SALMONELLA SCARE AFTER EDWINA CURRIE TELLS THE BRITISH PUBLIC (WRONGLY) THAT MOST EGGS CONTAIN THE BACTERIA

02/93

Banned

Did The
Lion
King
really
cause
a child's
suicide?



DON'T PANIC!

Don't believe what you read. Many of media's favourite scare-stories are complete balls

BIZARRE says: Don't forget! We live in two worlds. There is the mundane world of our every-day existence, and beyond that, separated by a tissue-thin layer of cheap paper, is another world. This is the world where rape and violent death are common. Where watching a nasty movie will turn you into a killer. Where holes in the ozone layer will give you skin cancer, if you don't get eaten by a mystery killer bug. This is the world as seen through the eyes of the news media. Beware of it!

By JAMES WALLIS

WE THINK OF NEWSPAPERS and news programmes as fair and impartial. After all, news is news, and while it can have a political spin put on it, the media wouldn't report a story unless it was grounded in solid fact. Would they?

Newspapers and TV news programmes have to sell themselves to us, and that means running stories that are going to grab our attention. Important but dull stories are getting pushed aside in favour of speculation: lots of crime, sex and badly researched or biased reports. And the result of all this sensationalism is that most people are now convinced the everyday world is a much worse place than it is.

It's not new. Politicians and newspapers today bewail how terrible things have become – not like they were 20 years ago. Yet 20 years ago they were saying the same thing. ("In the past two decades standards and values have so deteriorated that materialism and selfishness have become the norm" wrote the *Daily Mail* in 1977.) And 40 years ago it was the same story. ("Over the past 25 years we in this country,

through misguided sentiment, have cast aside the word 'discipline,'" claimed a speaker at the Conservative Party Conference in 1958.) And 25 years before that, in 1933, papers were complaining about "our drawing-room courts" and "namby-pamby methods" of dealing with young criminals. Things have always been bad. Or, at least, the media have always made it look that way.

"Newspapers don't lie," wrote the veteran journalist Clement Freud, "they just invent the truth." Scare-stories blow over, but nobody then bothers to report that it was based on a statistical blip, a biased report or a straight lie – after all, that's not news. So the level of tension, distrust and fright in society increases.

The world is becoming more paranoid. Twenty years ago children played freely in the streets. Today parents are scared to let them walk to school for fear of abductors, paedophiles and child-killers, even though the number of children murdered by strangers each year has barely changed in decades. You're far more likely to be killed



CHILD'S PLAY: "Hi, I'm Chuckie"

by someone you know than by a stranger. But the scares keep piling up: dangerous dogs; dangerous videos; hand-guns; knives. And when a media scare leads to new laws being rushed through Parliament, then the line has been crossed between the hype-world and the real world.

We think it's time to put the record straight on a few of the media's favourite hot stories, particularly the ones that really worry people. Think it's unsafe for children to go outside, in case they get abducted by satanic paedophile murderers? Will watching *Pulp Fiction* turn you into a slaving psycho-killer? Is that E in your pocket going to make your brain dry up? Read on.

The number of children murdered by strangers each year has barely changed in decades

DRUGS: Sorted or shorted?

MOST DRUGS have been illegal all over of the world for several decades. But why, when there is solid evidence that many of them have medicinal uses, and that others aren't harmful in clean, uncut forms, are they illegal when equally harmful and more addictive drugs such as nicotine and alcohol are freely available?

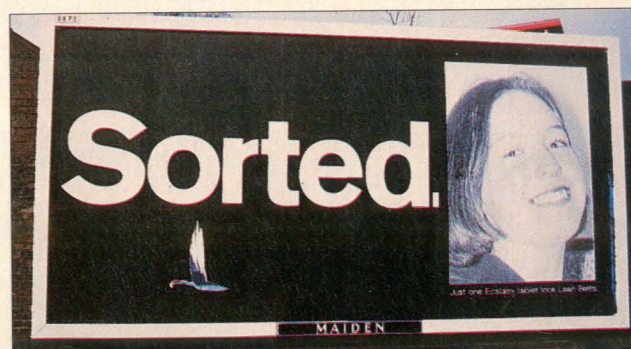
The media takes its lead from its readers on drugs. While public opinion is against them, no paper is going to run pro-drugs stories (unless, like the *Independent on Sunday*, they're desperate to get any publicity at all). This feeds back into public opinion, creating a vicious circle. It's in few peoples' interest to inform us about drugs.

Instead they trade in knee-jerk reactions. Leah Betts, the world's most famous victim of Ecstasy, did not die from the drug; she died from drinking too much water in

an attempt to dilute its effects. At the time, Dr John Henry, director of the National Poisons Unit at Guy's Hospital, was quoted as saying, "I am not aware of anybody who has died as a result of an acute allergic reaction to Ecstasy."

When Mary Hartnoll, Glasgow's director of social services, pointed out in 1996 that more people die from allergic reactions to aspirin than from taking Ecstasy, the press called her a "silly woman" who should "get her facts right". Her facts were right.

The media wants to be seen as crusading. Once it's declared its position on a controversial issue like drugs, truth won't change that. Accurate facts and genuine experts become the enemy, to be dismissed or condemned. Several newspapers articles, for instance, have claimed that Californian doctor Charles Grob has definite



LEAH BETTS: the media's first E-martyr

proof that ecstasy causes permanent brain damage. Grob has stated that: "This is a gross distortion and misrepresentation of our research." Far from believing it causes brain damage, his university has taken out a patent on the medical use of MDMA (Ecstasy's chemical name).

The Government's angle on the

problem, shared by much of the mass media (drugs=bad) does not help people understand the real dangers associated with their use. Meanwhile, more than half of all crimes committed in Britain are connected to drugs. There's no better argument for controlled legalisation than that, but the people with the power don't listen.

Aspirin kills many more people than Ecstasy

Screen and screen again

ONE OF THE MEDIA'S favourite kick-dogs is violence. We live, so we're told, in an incredibly violent society, where scenes of torture and death fill the cinema and TV screens, de-sensitising us, turning us into thugs and killers, and damaging the innocent minds of children everywhere.

Well, no. Here we go again. Ever since the development of the cinema, people have been worried that violent images are somehow 'catching'. The National Council for Public Morals looked into it as far back as 1917 (and concluded that "it certainly has not been proved that the increase in juvenile crime generally has been consequent on the cinema"). Before cinema, it was theatre, music-halls or penny-dreadfuls that were destroying the minds of the nation's youth. In Elizabethan times it was football ('a murdering play'). In fact, since entertainment is always about to destroy society as we know it, it's a wonder we've lasted this long.

There are cases, undeniably, where people have imitated violent scenes from TV programmes or movies. *A Clockwork Orange* is one; and more recently a subway ticket office in New York was robbed using a method from the movie *Money Train*. That looks like an open-and-shut case: films inspire violence. But the question is: did the film

inspire the violence itself, or just the style of it? Would the same crime have been done in a different way if the criminal hadn't seen the film?

The evidence seems to suggest yes. It seems people can be actively influenced by media violence, but only if they have violent tendencies already. John Trevelyan, former director of the British Board of Film Censorship, wrote that: "There is no evidence that the fantasy violence in films begets or stimulates real violence."

The other worry is that film violence somehow 'de-sensitises' us to real violence. Academic studies seem to show that this is true. But there are complex arguments on both sides about the cathartic effects of violence, and how the mind distinguishes fantasy from reality. Surely, if pictures of torture victims de-sensitised us to violence, then organisations like Amnesty International wouldn't use them in their publicity. And our noble forebears, who were able – encouraged, even – to watch all manner of horrors like hangings, floggings and beheadings – must have been incredibly de-sensitised. But it didn't seem to do the British Empire any harm.

Yet if the media can't have truth, it'll make do with fiction. The film *Child's Play 3* was heavily linked to the killing of Jamie Bulger, and the



A CLOCKWORK ORANGE: controversial, violent – and dangerous?

trial judge and many papers claimed that it had inspired the two juvenile killers. Yet there was no evidence that either murderer had seen the film. One of their fathers owned a video of it. That was all. One of the killers admitted his favourite movie was *The Goonies*. British papers, however, produced front-page headlines screaming for the 'evil' horror film to be banned.

In this country in the last few years, only one film can be said to have inspired a child to kill – in this

case, kill themselves. In November 1995, fourteen-year-old Imtiaz Ahmed from Stoke-on-Trent was found hanging from a tree. He had been obsessed with one particular film, and he had left a note claiming that he had killed himself because he wanted to be reincarnated as one of the characters in the movie, and asked that his video of it be buried with him. The film was Disney's *The Lion King*.

BIZARRE says: ban this evil child-killing feel-good cartoon filth now!

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN

A QUARTER OF A MILLION people die every day, but aside from royalty it's the death of children that inspires most horror, and it's their safety that society is most concerned about. The most shocking murders of the 1990s are the Dunblane massacre and the Bulger murder. The demon image of Myra Hindley was rekindled by the painting of her that was recently shown and then vandalised at the Royal Academy. Paedophiles, always reviled, have become exiles; 'outed' by locals, newspapers or the police wherever they try to live. Parents are afraid to let their children talk to strangers. The mood of the moment is one of fear and paranoia. After all, isn't society filled with people who want to harm children?

In a word, no. This is one case where the media has managed to completely change how children are raised and taught – based on nothing but words. You only have to glance at the official statistics: the average number of children killed by strangers each year between 1975 and 1984 – when kids were considered comparatively safe – was 6.7. Between 1985 and 1994 that figure had risen – to 6.8. Or, in other words, one more child was killed in 1985-1994 than in 1975-84. Which isn't good, but isn't exactly the holocaust that people imagine.

A lot of the fuss about childrens' safety isn't about abduction or murder, it's about the euphemistically named 'abuse'. Most people assume that when a news report says a child has been 'abused', it means sexual abuse. Not so. If it was sexual abuse, the paper would say so. Sex, even underage abusive sex, sells papers.

There's no denying that sexual abuse of children happens, and paedophiles do exist. But one thing that doesn't, despite acres of press coverage, is ritual Satanic child abuse. From the Cleveland child-sex scandal of 1987 (the prosecution case collapsed) to the Orkneys case in the 1990s, to the more recent Wenatchee scandal in the USA (41 people arrested; 20 jailed on no physical evidence of abuse; most of the convictions currently being overturned), not a single case has ever been proved.

The real monsters were over-zealous social workers, too credulous police, and extremist Christian pressure groups who gave seminars to social-work departments about the horrors of Satanic child abuse, with 'experts' whose qualifications were dubious or non-existent. These groups were involved in the Satanic abuse panics in Nottingham in the 1980s and Rochdale in 1989, when 20 children were taken into care despite showing no signs of physical abuse.

It's easy to coach a child to believe and repeat things that aren't true, especially when it's clear that the adults want them to say and believe these things. It's also possible to make children and adults believe that certain things have happened to them – no hypnosis, no brain-washing, just simple persuasion. From there it's a short step to the idea of 'recovered memories', now being debunked as 'false memory syndrome'. In cases like these, we have to ask: if a child hasn't been abused, but is separated from its parents and made to believe that they did perverse sexual things to it – isn't that child abuse?

It's easy to coach a child to believe things that aren't true



CLEVELAND: Evidence is given at the child-abuse inquiry

Flesh-Eating Bacteria: anatomy of a panic



GRUESOME... but incredibly rare

IN THE SPRING OF 1994, Britain – or at least its tabloid press – was gripped by an unimaginable terror: a new form of previously unknown 'superbug' that could infect anybody and which would literally eat them from the inside out, "at the rate of an inch an hour". New cases were reported weekly, and scare statistics were brought out: 132 victims in Holland in the last 18 months, 28 of them fatal; between seven and ten lives lost to the new bug in Gloucestershire that summer alone.

It was a scare-hype of the simplest kind. The bacteria in question was not unknown to science, it was a form of Group A Streptococcus (GAS), better known as necrotising fasciitis. About fifty people are diagnosed with this infection each year in the UK, and although it can be treated with antibiotics and surgery, roughly 30% of them die of it. By a coincidence, in 1994 several of those fatalities happened to be in Gloucestershire. The scare started with a single report in a local paper that a hospital operating theatre had been closed to remove a GAS contamination. When two other reports of GAS cropped up in the same region, the story spread to the national press. It turned out that all those cases had been different forms of the bacteria. Nobody had infected anybody. There was no epidemic. It was simply a statistical blip. But the media, smelling a good horror story, fastened onto the blip and ignored everything else.

"Flesh-eating bug ate my mother in 20 minutes" screamed the *Daily Mirror*. "Killer bug ate my face" exclaimed the *Daily Star*. The effects of necrotising fasciitis are pretty extreme (see pic, right), and make good 'news' – but it wasn't news. In the USA, the National Center for Infectious Diseases noted: "Since 1992, the total number of laboratory reports of systemic GAS in England and Wales has remained stable." But no one paid any attention. **B**



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“Stripped naked and hung from the ceiling by his thumbs until he could feel the bones break...”

Torture is primitive, brutal and destructive. It's also still incredibly widespread. TONY THOMPSON investigates

IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, just around lunchtime on 20 October 1994, a union activist from Mexico City named Demetrio Hernandez was bundled into the back of a van by 10 armed men in civilian clothes. It quickly emerged that his captors were federal policemen who accused him – wrongly – of being part of an armed leftist group sympathetic to a group of guerrillas in the south of the country.

Being innocent, Hernandez couldn't confess or give the police any information, so he was driven to

a secret location, stripped naked and hung from the ceiling by his thumbs until he could feel the bones break and his shoulders and elbows slipping out of their joints. Still he 'refused' to confess, so his captors spun him around, stabbing him with knives and needles. When he still wouldn't talk, the real torture began.

With polished precision, one of the policemen began to administer electric shocks. First to his toes, shins and knees. Then his elbows, forehead, neck and nostrils. The

backs of his hands, his tongue, gums and teeth. Then his navel, his testicles, his penis...

Still Hernandez resisted, so his tormenters placed a plastic bag over his head, removing it just split seconds before he suffocated. Next water mixed with powdered chilli was forced up his nostrils. Finally, his head was held down in a toilet bowl which was flushed repeatedly.

After six months of such torture, Hernandez was released without charge. His torturers were never brought to justice.

For everyone who ever had faith in human progress, statistics on torture make grim reading. According to a study published by Amnesty International last year, torture is more widespread than ever. "We published reports on worldwide torture in 1973 and 1984. Most countries implicated in those reports are still actively torturing their citizens and a few more have been added to the list," Amnesty explains.

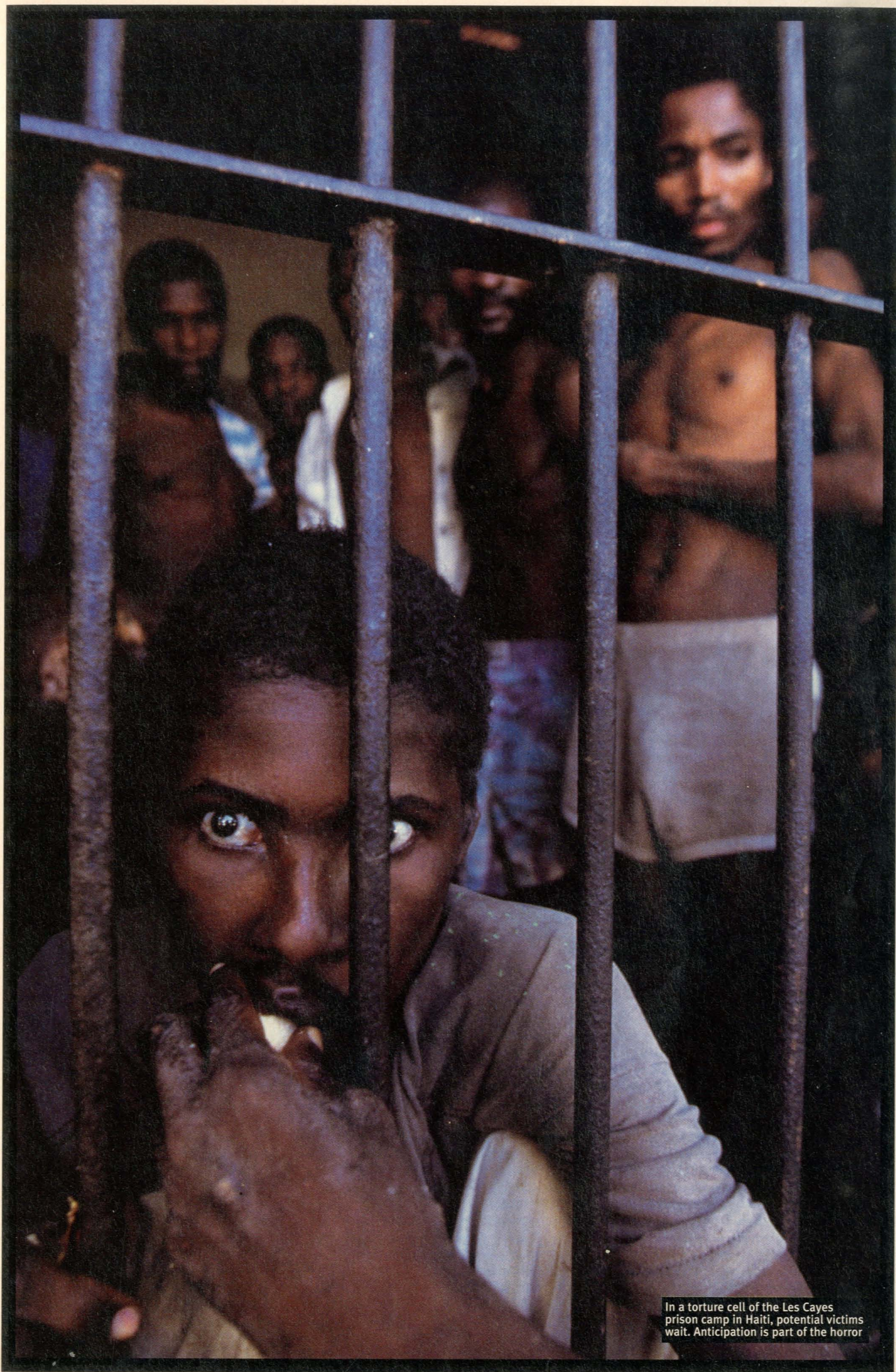
According to the report, torture is employed by government security agencies and police forces from Serbia to Indonesia, from Iraq to Sri Lanka, and from Haiti to Papua New Guinea. In all, Amnesty estimates torture has reached "epidemic proportions" in over 40 countries, with outbreaks reported in 60 more.

In Burma, one favoured means of extracting confessions is the 'helicopter'. It involves suspending the victim by the wrists or ankles from a rotating ceiling fan. As the subject spins around and around, men stand in a circle and inflict blows on the rotating body. This can continue for many hours until the victim passes out. They are then revived so the torture can begin again.

In Bolivia, prisoners are handcuffed and then placed in the 'pig' position: bending over backwards until their heads touch the ground. Their faces are then forced against a wall and blows are rained down on their exposed, arched body, particularly around the ribs and genitals.

In Kenya, torture is part of the security routine. The most common method involves making the prisoner crouch while a stick is passed behind their knees and in front of their elbows. With their wrists





In a torture cell of the Les Cayes prison camp in Haiti, potential victims wait. Anticipation is part of the horror

BANNED!

chained together over their ankles, they're held in a ball and hung upside down, to be beaten with sticks, chains or whips on the soles of their feet.

Water tortures, which originated in China, have now spread way beyond the Far East. Modern water torture has many forms but basically centres around the terror caused by slow drowning. One version involves the victim being tied to a chair which is tipped backwards. A towel is then placed over the victim's face and water is dripped onto it. It becomes harder and harder to breathe through the waterlogged towel without inhaling increasing amounts of water. By occasionally wringing out the towel, the torture can be sustained for some time.

You may think all this is unlikely to happen to you, but in many countries torture is routinely used in all sorts of minor cases. In South Africa, for example, where electrical shocks are the favoured technique,

torture is used to trace firearms or get witnesses to talk – in fact to get any kind of information at all. Electrodes are attached to the genitals and rubber bungs are shoved into the mouth and nose, causing slow suffocation while the shock is administered. And after having your groin zapped you can look forward to being raped, either by police or prison guards, or by dogs specially trained for that purpose.

In almost all parts of the world, there are groups of professional torturers who spend years studying human anatomy to perfect their art. These people learn how to produce such intense pain and sensation in a subject that death becomes preferable. But they can hold a person on the threshold of death for hours, even days at a time. They are known as doctors.

It was in Nazi Germany that physicians became closely involved in the development of torture instruments and methods, making

it a medical speciality. Today doctors are routinely employed by police and military torturers to prevent prisoners from dying. In many cases they have brought victims back from the dead simply so they can live to be tortured some more.

Just how can a human being behave like that? Doctors brought in by the Chilean authorities during the state of emergency between 1973 and 1988 to save lives talk of how they slowly became brutalised and fascinated to see how much pain people could take.

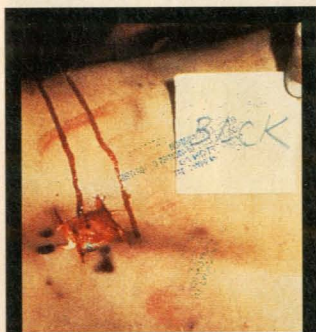
This slow descent into horror seems to be common. Because they face being ostracised from their profession, and criminal prosecution, few doctors are willing to speak of their work in the field of torture. But last year Dr Milan Kovecic, who had set up and run a Serbian concentration camp in 1992, gave an interview to foreign journalists.

"Omarska was planned as a reception centre," he said. "The

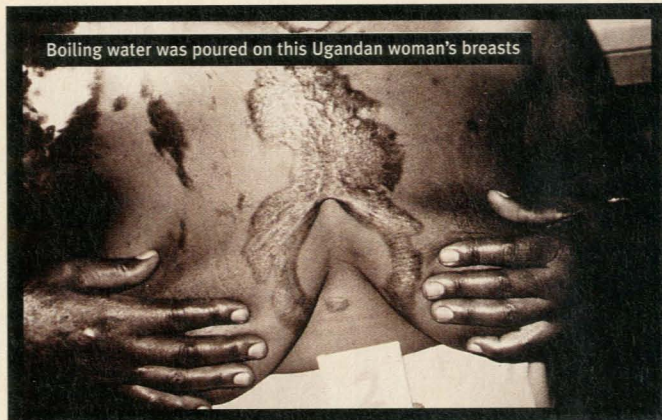
idea was to take in families for their own protection, but then it turned into something else. I cannot explain the loss of control. You could call it collective madness. This is my personal secret. Things did not turn out the way I planned. If you have to do things by killing people, well... now my hair is white."

The madness at Omarska included beatings and electric shocks but much more. Muslim men were forced to sing Serbian nationalist songs while guards shot at those who forgot the words. Others had their teeth smashed with an axe. Two men died from their wounds after being suspended from a crane and beaten. They had been forced to bite one another's genitals, and then made to have sex with each other, after which they were castrated. No one knows the full death toll, but in one evening alone more than 160 prisoners were killed.

Although some regimes still rely on brute force – read Andy McNab's



Above and right: just two of the 11,000 cases seen since 1986 by the London-based Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture



A brief history of torture

WHO KNOWS when the first person worked out that inflicting excruciating pain on someone could get vital information out of them? Early Greek and Roman laws specified that only slaves could be tortured (and leaned towards the view that anything a slave said without being tortured should be taken with a pinch of salt). Later it was decided free men could be tortured in treason cases. Unfortunately for the slaves, their master had the right to offer them for torture to help prove his own innocence.

In ancient Britain and Europe, if you committed a crime your guilt or innocence would be decided by ordeal or by mortal combat. It was believed that God would protect the good and punish the guilty, and that therefore an innocent man would not suffer (much) from picking up a bar of red-hot metal or being thrown, bound, into a river. Even so, a real confession was regarded as the best evidence, so from the 13th century torture became an integral part of the legal system and remained in use across Europe until the 1800s.

The entire system was carefully regulated. Various penal codes stipulated the number of turns that could be applied to

thumb screws, according to the severity of the crime. Jurors were told to distinguish between different degrees of torture according to the amount of pain inflicted. At the lowest level, the accused would be placed on the rack until their limbs dislocated. If the subject managed to get through the entire process without confessing, he would have to be released for lack of proof.

As crime rates grew, so the torture industry soared and increasingly bizarre methods of inflicting pain were introduced. There was the Judas Cradle, a wooden pyramid eight feet high on which the victim was sat so that the tip entered his or her rectum. Increasing amounts of weight would be tied to their legs to pull the prisoner further down.

Then there was the Inquisition Chair, which was designed to inflict pain on the whole body at once.

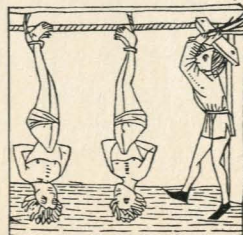
A large wooden throne was covered in sharp metal spikes on which the victim was forced to sit. They'd then be tied down, to be impaled even more firmly on the spikes, until the inch-long metal points had entered every part of their body, leading to enormous

pain and massive blood loss. Even confessing brought little relief from the agony.

The earliest attempts to abolish torture date back to at least the year 1750, when it was argued not only that such acts were inhumane but also that the evidence they produced was not wholly reliable. But torture never went away, and the art underwent a resurgence in the 20th century when German's Third Reich developed it as a medical speciality in concentration death camps, as did Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin and, more recently, Pol Pot in Cambodia.

Though anyone can use brute force to coax a confession from someone, many authorities identify the Chinese and Koreans as the most subtle and effective torturers. Octave Mirbeau's notorious turn-of-the-century book *The Torture Garden* features a Chinese master-torturer who flays his victims so that their skin is cut away and left hanging

in two flaps attached at the shoulders like obscene wings. Others are tied down with their legs spreadeagled so a box containing a semi-starved rat can be placed against their genitals. Fire applied to the back of the box encourages the rat to tear its way through the soft tissues in a desperate attempt to escape.



"I cannot explain the loss of control. You could call it collective madness"

A victim lies in a Haitian torture cell

harrowing account of torture (including beatings and teeth extractions) at the hands of the Iraqi army during the Gulf War, in *Bravo Two Zero* – most now accept that psychological methods are actually more effective (see the 'Brainwashing' box, right).

But even non-specialists can easily think up grisly ways of making people say and do what they want. In May this year raiders broke into the Staffordshire home of a retired businessman and asked him to open his safe. When he refused, they poured boiling water over his wrists and legs until he co-operated. They escaped with £10,000. In August, five New York policemen were suspended after it was alleged they had tortured a Haitian immigrant by sexually abusing him with the wooden handle of a toilet plunger. Torture remains

most effective when it comes to producing a climate of fear in which those being tortured are too scared to rise up against their attackers.

When people think of torture they imagine banana republics and dictatorships, not First World countries. But it's wrong to assume that just because a country is 'civilized' no human rights abuses take place. In California last August it emerged that guards at a maximum security prison had been torturing prisoners – some were made to stand barefoot on hot tarmac until the flesh on the soles of their feet burned away – to make them fight in gladiator-style battles. The guards bet on the fights and shot prisoners who refused or didn't stop fighting when told. In eight years 57 prisoners had been shot by guards, eight of them fatally. **B**

Brainwashing

IN MILITARY CIRCLES the idea of physical torture is slowly giving way to more sophisticated techniques of mental and psychic torture – now recognised as a far more effective way of extracting information about enemy positions and movement.

The notion that individuals could be coerced into certain actions without the use of physical force first came to public attention during the Chinese Civil War in the late 1930s when, using newly developed techniques known as *hsi nao* (literally 'wash brain'), Communist soldiers were able to 'reprogram' their Nationalist captives so that after just a few weeks of indoctrination the prisoners would be prepared and willing to fight against their former comrades. The same techniques were refined for use against American soldiers during the Korean war, and again during the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

Today, brainwashing techniques are used not just by the military and cults but also to varying degrees by hypnotists, politicians, salesmen, the police and even rock bands. Confidential military training papers obtained by **BIZARRE** show how interrogators are trained to identify different specific personality types and then use particular techniques to get them to crack.

For example, with strong, aggressive people, interrogators are taught to pick away at the subject's self-esteem with constant mocking and ridicule. This makes the subject insecure and brings down their barriers of resistance. In the case of calmer, more reasoned types, interrogators are instructed to ask a series of questions at high speed, deliberately misunderstanding or misquoting the replies, and also to continually vary the subject matter. This creates enormous confusion which, again, makes the subject highly vulnerable to suggestion.

In its most basic, simplified form, brainwashing involves confusing and disorienting the subject to such a degree that he or she is willing to accept a new belief system. Sleep deprivation, low-calorie diets (such as the prison classic of bread and water) and then long, difficult interrogations followed by bouts of hard physical labour are said to be a highly effective combination. "If you can create a sense of powerlessness, get people away from their normal support systems and then manipulate rewards, punishments and experiences to suppress old behaviour and elicit new responses, then you are controlling someone's mind," says Dr Margaret Singer of Berkeley University, a leading authority on brainwashing. "And once you control someone's mind, you can get them to do your bidding, tell you all their secrets and even to kill others or themselves on your command."

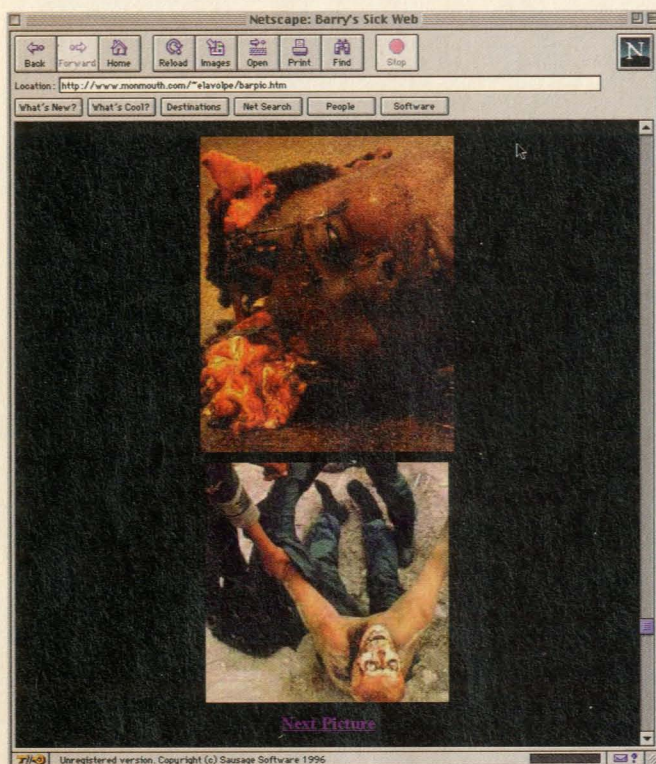
Instruments made specifically for torture, mostly from factories in China



BANNED!

World Wide Worst

If it's weird, sick or just downright twisted, it'll be on the internet. In spades. This is the frontier of free speech: get used to it, it's the last place where anything goes



ANUS HORRIBILIS

<http://www.well.com/user/cynsa/newbutt.html>

Interested in things up people's bottoms? Rectal Foreign Bodies is the site for you. Find out the truth about gerbiling, meet the Butt Pirates of the Caribbean and Joseph Pujol the Fartiste, learn how to give a concrete enema, and look at X-rays of unlikely objects up people's arses. The list of the most unusual

objects found in jacksies (including a frozen pig's tail and a kangaroo tumour) doesn't go into enough detail... where do you get a kangaroo tumour in the first place?

SCRAPING THE BOTTOM

<http://monkey.hooked.net/m/chuck/stool/>

Chuck Farnham's Weird World hosts this corner for crap lovers, featuring up-close pics of turds and musings

on the joys and perils of big jobbies. While you're there, look at Kurt Cobain's suicide note and a pic of what's left of his head, read NASA's provisions for sex on the Space Shuttle and download a video clip of someone cutting the balls off a corpse... among other delights.

CRAZY CHRISTIANS

<http://www.godhatesfags.com/requiem.gif>

Two days after Di'n'Dodi bought the farm, these fundamentalists – who don't mind pics of women with their tits out – had a 'Requiem to a Royal Whore' page up. We quote: "While her husband and children were in England the international whore princess, Diana, was indulging the lusts of the flesh with her latest paramour in Paris. In the midst of their depraved revelry and riotous, adulterous merriment."

SICKOS

<http://www.shocking.com/~despair/malady.htm>

Leishmaniasis is the disorder of the day: it makes your skin go bumpy, lumpy and saggy like an elephant's arse, and eats out the inside of your face. The host site, All Things Dark And Gruesome, has weird and nasty stuff, including sick pic of the week and morbid fact du jour. Design's a bit naff but the pics are top notch.

WHITE SUPREMACY

<http://www.nidlink.com/~aryanvic>



Unfortunately there are hundreds of white-power sites on the web, but for sheer breadth of reference (they have hundreds of weird Christian books and pamphlets 'available for a donation', including *Jewish Ritual Murder* and *Judge*

Paul Benson, Portrait of a Bastard) these guys win. A mix of Jew-hating, fundamentalism and conspiracy theories, and the place for rednecks to get their Aryan Nation key-ring.

BLOOD'N'GUTS

<http://www.concentric.net/~Franco/TheDeadBodyPicturePage> is just that... a mishmash of corpse shots



culled from all over, some from car crashes, some from autopsies, some fakes (identified as such), including a gut-wrencher of a pic showing a body cut in half. Not for the faint-hearted.

STUMPS

<http://www.frantana.com>

Probably the most specialised dating agency on the web, Frantana aims to introduce female Russian amputees to "intelligent, brave, kind man without money problem". Here you can view a range of smiling amputees and book a holiday to Moscow where you can meet your potential bride.

QUICK FLASHES:

<http://www.lovejungle.com/preview2.html>

Don't bother subscribing to this site, just pay it a quick visit for a (probably) faked but extremely graphic pic of a hermaphrodite's front bottom

<http://www.xnet.com/~cmd/qs/qs.htm>

It's got advice on what to do if you fall into quicksand, facts about quicksand, myths about quicksand and a review of quicksand in the media... all a poor excuse to show lots of pics of babes screaming as they sink into the goo.

<http://www.monmouth.com/~elavolpe/barpic.htm>
Cut to the chase on Barry's weird pic site, with weekly changing splatter images: when we visited there was a guy with half his brain on the floor and a charming shot of a woman suffocating inside a plastic bag.

<http://www.islandnet.com/~moron/deterrent/roulette.html>

Russian Roulette on the net. Luck out and you get a pic of a man with a hankie in his mouth and most of his intestines on the floor beside him. Blow your virtual brains out and you get a pic of a decapitated head in a plastic bag. Well worth spinning the wheel.



GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

<http://www.shocking.com/~despair/maindark.htm>

The guy on the right got so high on PCP (Angel Dust to you and me) he decided it'd be a good idea to cut his face off with a piece of glass and feed it to his dog. He and his story were on the shocking.com site for a while, among many others, until he had to be removed for legal reasons. However there are still plenty of disgusting pics and links to be found there.

<http://www.mancow.com/grossfreaks.html>

Welcome to the Freakshow, designed with old-world lettering and fake posters. There's a veritable cornucopia of stomach-churners here, including lots of vomit pics. Special mention goes to the guy with most of his arm ripped off, and the moist and swollen genital cancer shot, but most disgusting is the pic of the worst haemorrhoids you can imagine.





The bare hair bunch

WHEN WE PRINTED a pic of hirsute Sandra in our second issue, we had no idea of the enormous response it would get. We also had no idea just how many of you pervy devils would want to know how to contact *Hair To Stay* magazine, the motherlode for those who like to eat and floss at the same time.

However, among the hundreds of pleas for the address (and special thanks to the chap who sent us a fiver for the information, by the way) were a number of people who couldn't believe that any woman really could be that hairy, and thought that Sandra must be a man or a trans-sexual. At last we can prove otherwise: she's all woman, albeit with an outer layer that keeps her warm on winter nights.

"Aha!" we hear you say, particularly those of you who have read page 30, "but couldn't someone have used Photoshop to paint fake hair onto a picture of a normal model?" If you're still in denial, then you can get all the proof you'll ever need of her hairy glory – and the rest of her anatomy too – in the form of a full-length video of Sandra doing whatever it is that hairy women do. It's available for £25 (make cheques payable to 'Double D Productions' and quote reference 'BIZ SP55') from: 161-167 Block F, Riverside Business Centre, Haldane Place, London SW18 4UQ.

(If you're a hair fan in the US or Canada you'll need an NTSC copy of the vid. \$40 from Winter Publishing, Inc., PO Box 80667, Dartmouth, MA 02748, USA)

Enjoy!

BANNED!

Mother Souperior

Does your stomach turn over at the idea of eating human flesh? Then you won't want to know what this is about. And you *really* won't want to look at the pictures



Nuns at the Wat Thong monastery await a feast



The dead nun is ceremonially prepared, as is the pot (right)



IN OUR CIVILISED times cannibalism is dismissed either as an urban myth, an activity pursued by 'barbarous' cultures before European imperialists showed them the light, or as material for cheap gags. "Mummy, mummy, are we having Granny for dinner?" "Yes Johnny, if I can fit her in the oven". But surely, apart from the one or two cases of plane-crash and shipwreck survivors who are forced to eat their friends, cannibalism isn't practised today? Read on...

On the death of their 73-year-old mother superior, the isolated Buddhist community from the Wat Thong monastery near Nakhon Sri Thammarat in the south of Thailand, consisting of both monks and nuns, declared a feast of celebration and set about its preparations. The old nun lay in state for several days so that her followers could pay their respects. Her body was then carried out to the village centre and placed in a coffin-shaped cauldron.

The human broth was flavoured with lemon grass and traditional Thai spices and left to simmer. Some time later the par-boiled corpse was removed and placed on a makeshift barbecue built from bricks and corrugated iron. Once thoroughly cooked, the charred body was meticulously carved up and shared out amongst the grateful feasters. Traditionally the monks and nuns eat their fill first, and then the local villagers share out the scraps. There is soup for all. The head is then boiled clean, the skull crushed, and amulets of Buddha are made from the fragments for the senior monks.

This cannibalistic practice – a confused interpretation of Buddhist ideas on reincarnation – has been going on in this part of Thailand for decades. It's based upon the belief that the best way to perpetuate the wisdom and goodness of the old and wise is through the most direct route – by consuming their body. A pure and saintly mother superior is thought to be high in karmic protein. "Take this, my body...", as another religion would have it.

Once the Thai government got wind of what was going on, a mission was sent south to explain to the monks and nuns that eating people is wrong. But for every enlightened community, there are surely another three or four still carrying on the old ways. So if you visit any isolated villages on your trekking holiday through Thailand, check out what's on the menu before you chow down.



Honoured members of the community cut up and share out their dead leader



Extreme care is taken to collect all the bits – full of 'karmic protein' – as the body is sliced up. Local villagers get the scraps once the monks and nuns have eaten their fill

GHOSTTESTS

WITH THE

MOST TEST

**ON THE ROAD WITH THE
PHANTOM HITCHHIKER
OF BLUE BELL HILL**



**Plus CHATTING WITH
HITLER'S GHOST**

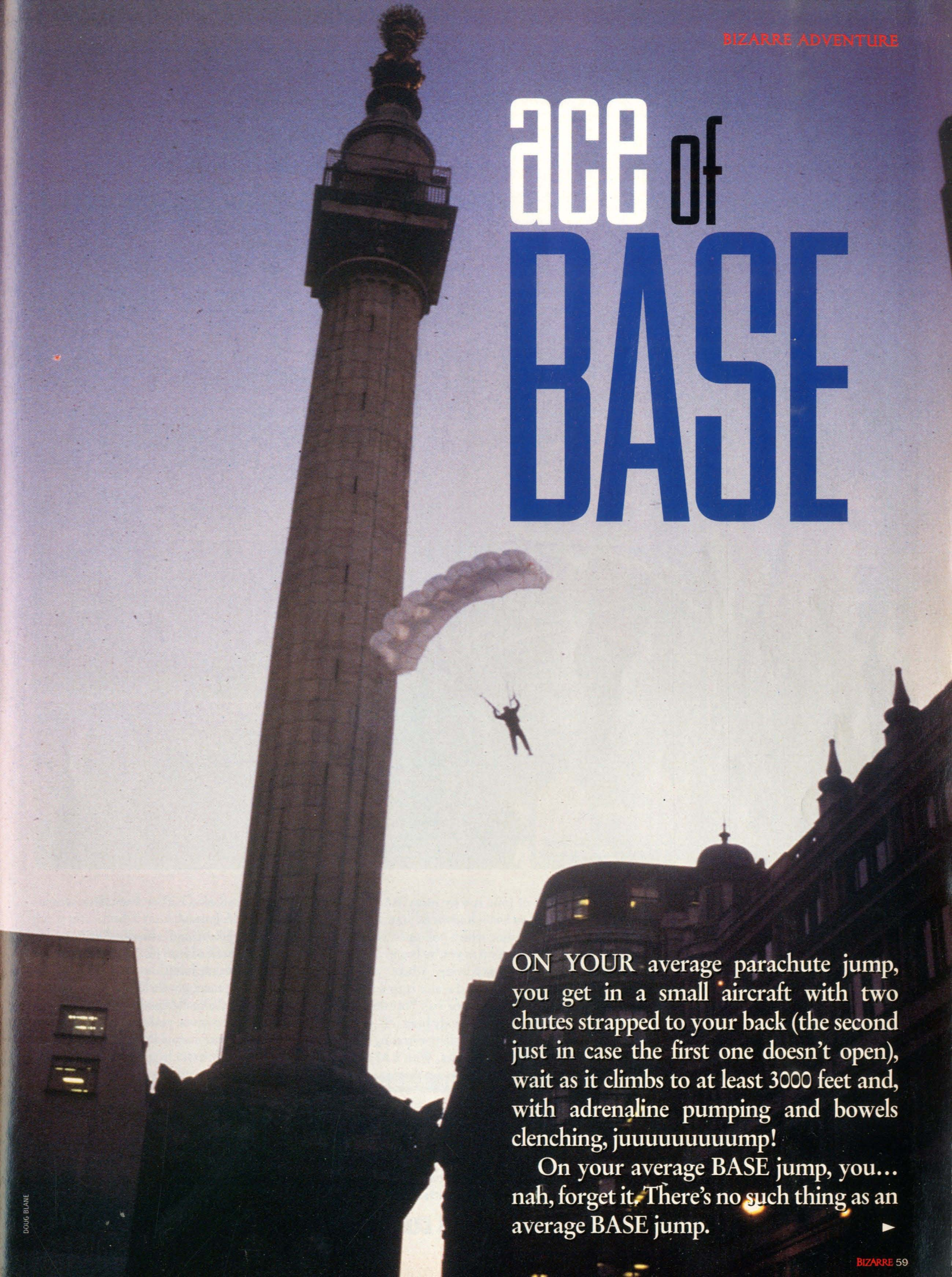
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the journal of strange phenomena

ISSUE 104 ON SALE IN
GOOD NEWSAGENTS NOW

AND IN FT 105 ON SALE 8 NOVEMBER...
**AT IT LIKE RABBITS - THE HUNGARIAN
COUNTESS AND HER HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN**
Plus THE BIGGEST BIRD YOU'VE NEVER SEEN





ace of BASE

ON YOUR average parachute jump, you get in a small aircraft with two chutes strapped to your back (the second just in case the first one doesn't open), wait as it climbs to at least 3000 feet and, with adrenaline pumping and bowels clenching, juuuuuuuuump!

On your average BASE jump, you... nah, forget it. There's no such thing as an average BASE jump. ►



"AFTER A jump it feels like I've faced the firing squad and they've all missed. Words cannot describe the feeling. If they could, you'd all be doing it!" The first thing you've got to ask anyone who throws themselves off low buildings with a very small parachute for fun has to be: Why? For Brian, a wiry BASE jumping enthusiast with lots of descents under his belt, it's the rush afterwards rather than the sphincter-testing feel of falling that does it for him.

BASE is a clumsy acronym (Buildings, Antennae, Spans and Earth) for the daredevil desire to jump off static objects – pylons, bridges, cliffs, balconies, tower blocks: you name it, someone's flung themselves off it, with only a few seconds to get their chute out, opened and under control as they plummet towards the hard, hard earth.

This lack of time is why many BASE jumps start with someone – known as your 'buddy' – holding onto a line which will open your parachute for you as soon as you've begun to fall. It's not like normal skydiving, where you're in freefall at 120mph and the aim is to softly and slowly open the chute, or risk "breaking your bones or ripping your bloody head off", as Brian patiently explains to me, demonstrating the idea with fag packets and tissues. With BASE jumping, however, "you want to get the thing open as soon as possible."

That can be crucial, in a sport where split-second timing means the difference between life and death. In the laboratory it's been proved that a fit and healthy person can respond to external stimulus (like seeing their parachute's failed to open) in 0.03 seconds. Which is just as well if



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG BLANE AND 'BRIAN'

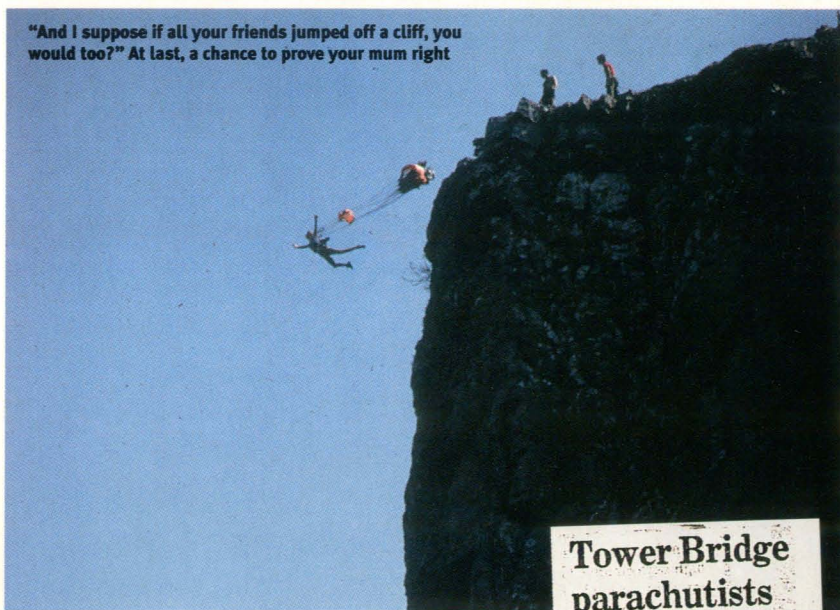
you've jumped off a cliff and are three seconds away from the ground.

As Simon Jakeman, the first BASE jumper to go public, described it in his book *Groundrush*: "On a low-altitude jump, once you have activated your equipment by throwing out the pilot chute to pull the main canopy from your back there is nothing more you can do... with four seconds to impact it would take you most of the fall to realise what was happening – or not happening – and open your reserve. There would simply not be enough air time left. So, having kicked off and thrown the pilot, I just waited while hammering down the cliff face directly over the roof of the car... My skin crawled with the sensation of being far too close to the wall."

No wonder the popular image of BASE jumpers is of renegade parachutists, nutters with

He occasionally mentions the jumpers' current state: "He was in a wheel-

"And I suppose if all your friends jumped off a cliff, you would too?" At last, a chance to prove your mum right



Tower Bridge parachutists in police quiz

TWO MEN who parachuted 150 feet into the Thames from the top of Tower Bridge have been questioned by police.

They were rescued from the river by a police launch, which was damaged when it struck a bridge support.

Staff say the men must have climbed up the thick chains that lower and raise the roadway. The bridge, which is being spruced for its 100th birthday in 1997, was closed to traffic at the weekend as scaffolding was dismantled.

The men and two others were questioned by police and bailed.

Fall guys hailed in

TWO men were rescued by river police yesterday after parachuting from Tower Bridge into the Thames.

They were fished out by a Met force boat. Four men were arrested over the incident.



Off a council tower-block. Brian is sponsored by Dia-calm

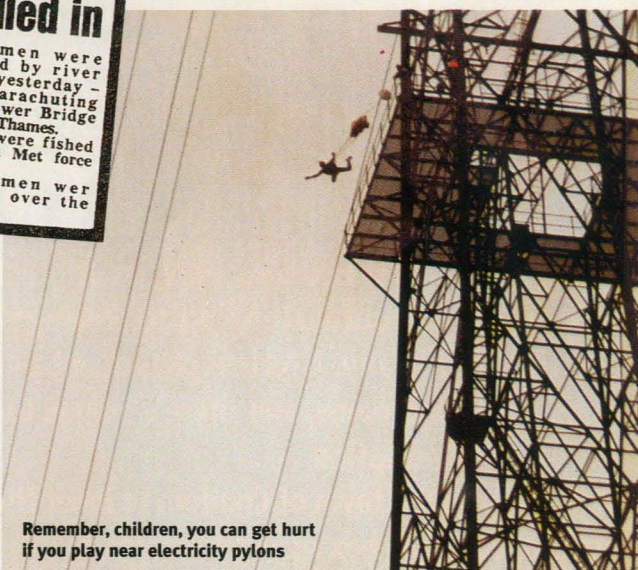
BARRIE HOUSE - ACTON 1/2 FLOORS (150 FEET)



Dam-duster



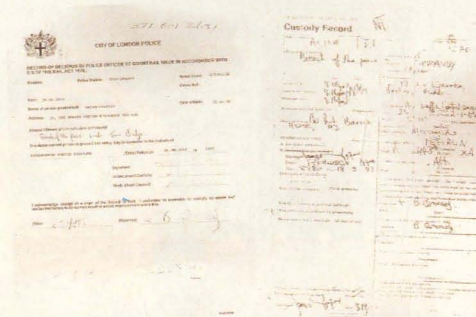
Not doing much this weekend? Why not get nicked for parachuting off national monuments like Tower Bridge?



Remember, children, you can get hurt if you play near electricity pylons

an advanced death wish. This is not helped by the typical media reaction to BASE jumpers' deaths. BASE jumping entered the British consciousness when 25-year-old Darren Newton made his famous and fatal dive from the top of the Hilton Hotel. The press reaction was hardly restrained: 'Hilton Leap Man Killed By Lust For Adventure' the headlines screamed. Three weeks before Darren's death a man jumping from the Hilton Hotel narrowly escaped the same fate when his chute caught on the corner of the building and collapsed. A downdraft from the roof then forced the canopy down very fast.

Up until Darren's much-publicised death, BASE jumping was a completely underground sport practised by an elite band of (largely) experienced parachutists, who would sneak off in groups of two or three to jump from radio masts



And here's a collection of Brian's favourite charge sheets

and famous spots like Cheddar Gorge. It's still hardly a family affair, at least in the UK, although in the US there's an annual Bridge Day where whole families, many of whom have never jumped before, go along to try out the sport, watched by quarter of a million spectators.

There are around 500 registered BASE jumpers worldwide: people who've completed a jump in each of the four categories and therefore been given a registered BASE number. And about 30 of those have died, including the man who's credited with shaping the sport as we know it, founder of the BASE club, Carl Boenish, who hit a cliff in Norway. Thirty out of 500: that's a 1-in-16 chance of becoming a smear of red.

If you do wipe out, don't expect reverence. Brian, one of the least mad sportsmen I've ever met, who freely admits the first time he jumped in the dark off a pylon he enjoyed it so much he immediately re-packed his parachute and went back for a second go, says: "There's a pact among jumpers: check whether the person's alive or dead, if you can't help them, dial 999 and scarper." And Brian knows. He calmly tells me

chair for four months", "He had a really nasty smash" and "He's dead"

RUBBER, DUCKIE?



THE PRIZE INCLUDES:

- Ferry crossing for two from Portsmouth to Brittany
- A week in a beautiful stone-walled cottage near Pontivy, in Brittany. A former chapel, it has all mod cons, three bedrooms, and there's beams too!
- Champagne reception
- A day trip to the town of Condom to meet the mayor and receive your gift box of 365 condoms
- Return home with a complimentary case of wine

Competition rules: 1. The competition is open to all residents of the British Isles excluding employees of John Brown Publishing, One Jump Ahead, their families, agents or anyone else connected with the competition. 2. The prizes will go to the first correct entries drawn after the closing date. 3. The judge's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. 4. The names of the winners will be available on request from the offices of Bizarre Marketing, John Brown Publishing Ltd, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR. 5. No cash alternative for the prize will be offered. The prize taken must be the same as the prize which is specified in the copy. 6. All entries must be received on the official entry form. 7. Closing date is 11 December 1997. Winners will be notified by 18 December 1997. 8. Bizarre accepts no responsibility for entries lost, damaged or delayed in the post. Entries will not be returnable. 9. Winners must be prepared to take part in publicity before or after the prize is taken. 10. Entrants are deemed to have accepted the rules and agreed to be bound by them.

There can be few greater honours than having the Mayor of Condom present you with a gift box of 365 condoms – except maybe having him help you put them on. But this is the highlight of our fabulous Bizarre competition to win a week's holiday in France – where you can also swing from the beams of a beautiful Brittany cottage and explore the Breton sights. What you want to do when you receive your gift box from his lordship is a matter for your discretion and stamina. Naturally we've arranged for you to take a friend with you – sorry, we can't supply one in an emergency.

And when in Rome, after all, you could devote some time to contemplating the condom. The first sheaths were used by the Egyptians and were probably made of animal gut. Early condoms were used to protect men from disease, not women from pregnancy. In the sixteenth century an Italian (it would be) let 1100 men try a linen sheath he'd created – and none of them caught syphilis. We don't know if they all used the same one.

Casanova called them 'la redingote Anglaise' – the English riding-coat. Rubber ones arrived in the 1840s; latex in the 1930s. Now you can get condoms in every colour and flavour. You can even get them printed with **Kama Sutra designs** – see below.

To enter the competition, see the coupon below and you may be lucky enough to live it up on a fabulous French holiday!

Send your answer to: Rubber Duckie, BIZARRE Marketing, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR.

**BUY
YOUR
MATES A
SHAG FOR
XMAS**

SPECIAL OFFER!

The randy buggers among you can also take advantage of our **special offer**: a boxed set of 24 condoms for just £15 inc VAT and P&P (normal price £25.60). Each condom in the **Art of Love** collection features one of 24 different positions from seminal sex tome the Kama Sutra. So if the only position you know is the one your parents used, then look and learn. Call your order through on 0033 29727 7566 or fax them on 0033 29727 7817. Alternatively you can send a cheque made payable to One Jump Ahead to PO Box 111, Croydon CR9 6WS. Your condoms will be sent out to you in very discreet packaging, honest.



Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime phone number _____

Question: How many condoms were sold in the UK last year?

☐ 96 million ☐ 170 million ☐ 1 million

Please return this coupon to: BIZARRE Rubber Duckie, John Brown Publishing, The New Boathouse, 136-142 Bramley Road, London W10 6SR. Closing date for entries is 11 December 1997.

☐ Please tick here if you prefer not to receive occasional mailings of interest from companies specially selected by BIZARRE.

Don't look down

Early BASE jumpers, mostly Americans, jumped off structures which nowadays seem ridiculously high. But there were no special BASE-jumping parachutes in those days, and their pioneering efforts – and careful recording of the jumps – helped the sport to develop to its present levels.

11th century The Mad Monk of Malmesbury hops off the top of Malmesbury Abbey using his habit as a parachute. He breaks his femur.

1782 Fausto Voranzio jumps off a tall building in Italy, using a wicker frame covered with material to slow his fall.

1912 Intrepid Capt A. E. Ball of the US Army leaps off the Statue of Liberty, with a real parachute.

1914-1918 Signalmen in tethered balloons, observing the war, became used to leaping over the side and parachuting down whenever they came under fire from enemy aircraft.

1939-1944 The Paras build parachute training towers (still maintained) for practice jumps.

1970 Royal Gorge Bridge, Colorado (1053ft) jumped by an unknown parachutist using a standard chute.

1971 Expert skier makes three jumps off El Capitan, using a triangular canopy to carry him away from the sloping cliff face.

1975 Jump from the 110-floor World Trade Centre brings BASE jumping to US media attention.

1978 After a year of research Carl Boenish 'invents' freefall BASE jumping as we know it with a well-documented group jump off El Capitan (3980ft above sea level).

How low can you go?

Nowadays a 4000ft BASE jump sounds ridiculous... here's the UK top ten BASE jumping targets

Cheddar Gorge	400ft
Centre Point, London	380ft
Tower Pylons, Dartford Bridge	375ft
Barbican, London	350ft
Beachy Head	320ft
Hilton Hotel, London	300ft
Beer Head	300ft
Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol	245ft
The Monument, London	163ft
Whispering Gallery, St Paul's Cathedral	102ft

about accidents that his friends have had, including one man who ended up being winched to safety by a coastguard helicopter when, by a one-in-a-million chance, his failed parachute caught on a spur of rock when jumping off Beer Head. "When I went back to collect the parachute, the guy in charge of the rescue team took out a map and said 'You see this bit of coastline? Next time, don't jump between here and here: that's my patch.'" As he takes me through his photos he occasionally mentions the jumpers' current state: "He was in a wheelchair for four months", "He had a really nasty smash" and "He's dead".

Doesn't that put Brian off? He shows me his diary for an 180-foot jump from the top of Harvey House in Brentford, made after an 18-month hiatus: "After a friend died BASE jumping I had been asking myself lots of questions: Why? Is it worth it? What about my family? Could I really handle such a painful death? But I was never getting an answer from myself."

Brian's curiously sensible for a guy who regularly risks his life. I look for a manic spark in his eye as he describes the sensation of tumbling at 70mph into the pitch-black night from a pylon, but he's very matter-of-fact about it. "Whatever worries you have, one thing can always push them out of your mind: the fear of death. However many times you put yourself into a situation where you are forced to address that possibility, you will never get used to it. Your attitude may change towards it... one guarantee is that it will eclipse everything in your mind." And afterwards: "It's the best bloody feeling in the world, with the ground under your feet."

For this reason Brian doesn't worry about the legal ramifications of his chosen buzz. While BASE jumping itself isn't illegal, trespass, breaking and entering (to get up buildings), and causing an affray are, and that's what BASE jumpers are usually held for, although charges are rare. "I've been picked up and cautioned a couple of times. But when they turn up and you've just

jumped it's like, what do I care."

It's almost impossible to imagine what it feels like. You can read about it, but you'll never understand unless you actually get on that ledge, lean forward at the right angle, and throw yourself into nothingness.

Is it a test of bravery? Brian is disparaging: "It's not the macho thing that most people think," although he opens his diary with: "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." Again and again BASE jumpers affirm that what seems like craziness is a matter of testing yourself. "Any BASE jumper who tells you he isn't shit scared that moment before he jumps is either lying or insane." He indicates a series of photos showing himself leaning over the railings on the balcony of a tower block. "You can see it in my face that I'm trying to get up the bottle to let go." What was he thinking at that moment? "Fuck me, this is low" was one of a multitude of thoughts racing through my head. And 'In about 30 seconds I'll be the happiest man alive.' **B**

"You can see it in my face that I'm trying to get up the bottle to let go"

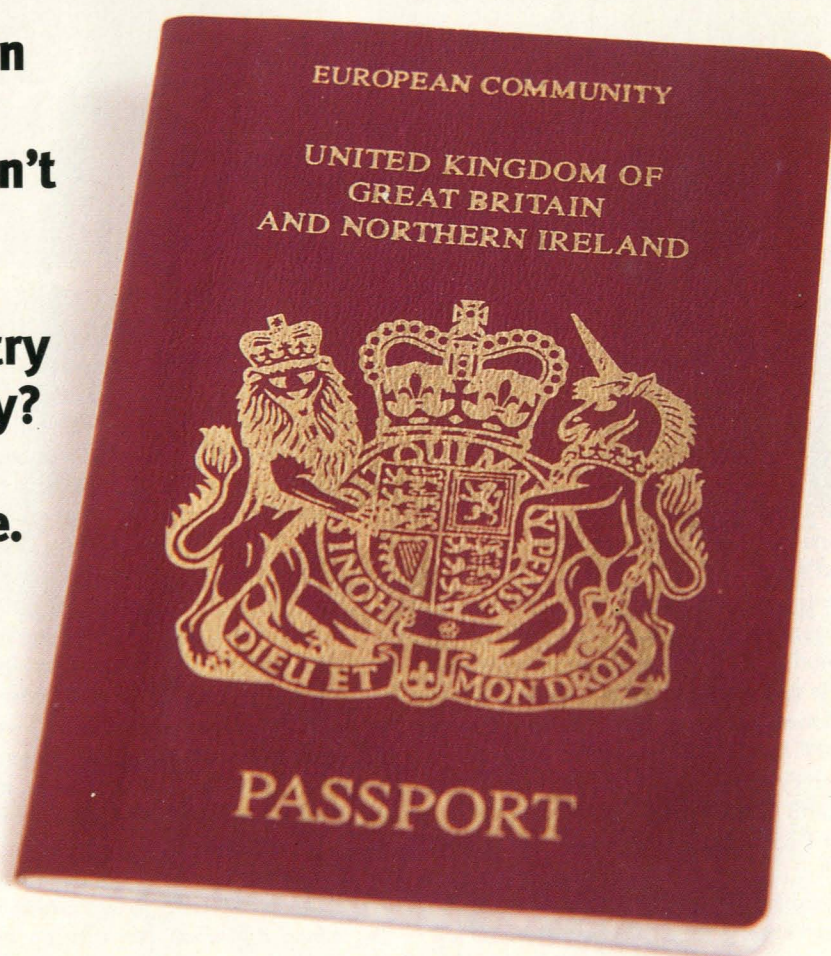
BIZARRE ADVENTURE



Lift broken? Late for a meeting?
Got a death-wish? Go BASE

How to DISAPPEAR

Lord Lucan did it, Reggie Perrin did it, and 65 British people attempt it every day. Who hasn't dreamed of leaving all their problems behind and simply disappearing to another country with a completely new identity? But it's not as simple as thinking up a smart new name. SETH DICKSON describes what it takes to vanish and never be found, and JAMES WALLIS rates the success of well-known people who have given it a try



YOU KNOW what it's like. Some days you walk into work and find yourself thinking, "What the fuck am I doing here?" Thoughts of throwing a cup of coffee over your boss turn into fantasies of abandoning everything – the unpaid debts, the too-small house, the tedious people you have to be nice to every day and the whole of your dead-end lifestyle – plus any forthcoming court appearances, impending bankruptcies, nasty revelations about your private life and so on... and starting again somewhere else.

Well, you can.

Every year in Britain, 25,000 people disappear. Most of them are found or come back, but about 10% don't. Some of them must be murder victims (about 30-40 bodies, recently dead but unidentifiable, turn up in the UK each year), secret suicides or alien abductees – yeah, right – but that's still a significant number of people who have shed their skin and begun again.

This article explains a bit about how people can and do disappear. Many of the things in here are thoroughly illegal, and could get you banged

their partner, sometimes with a knife sticking in them, and flee. The mistake they make is either fleeing with their new love – couples are easier to trace – or, like former MP John Stonehouse, later joining up with their new lover, who hasn't taken a new identity.

Up to 60 years ago, vanishing was easy. Before the advent of TV, mass media, computer networks, and the

When you disappear you're not just gaining a new identity, you're losing your old one as well. It means you can never go back

up for a long time. So rather than a how-to guide, look on this as a what-if guide. We make no guarantees and take no responsibility for what may happen if you act on any of the information that follows. On the other hand, 'Seth Dickson' isn't the name my parents gave me.

Disappearing is a total process; it can't be done by halves. It's not as simple as picking up a second passport: that's simple fodder for the likes of drug dealers. When you disappear you're not just gaining a new identity, you're losing your old one as well, and that raises some philosophical questions about the nature of self and identity which are too long-winded and polo-necked to be explored here. It also means you can never go back once you've done it. There are hundreds of reasons for disappearing, and the first thing you have to understand is that some of them are the wrong reasons. Don't think you can commit a murder and then disappear easily.

The main wrong reason that people disappear is for love. They meet the love of their life, but they're already firmly hitched. So they leave

creation of the welfare state and national insurance, you could simply move to a new area, adopt a new name, and with a few simple documents you could begin a new life. These days the digital world has made it all a lot harder – but it can still be done.

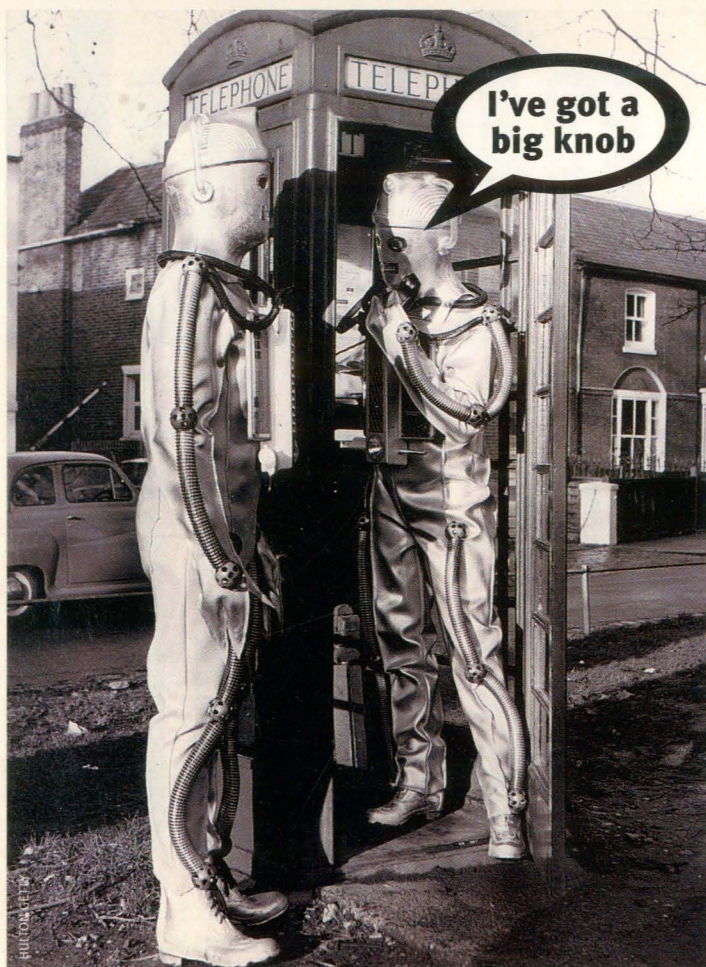
Disappearing in the 1990s is a process that's neither simple nor quick. So plan ahead. If you're going to make a complete break, there are four things you need to change: your legal identity, your physical identity, your mental identity and your location. Easiest of the three is the way you look. In fact, if all you're doing is disappearing for a short while and not

planning to cross any borders, a new look, a name and paying by cash, not credit cards or cheques, may be all that you need.

Top-notch disguises don't have to mean plastic surgery, but aren't as simple as having your hair dyed or cut, or growing a beard either. To escape being recognised, you need to change as much as you can about yourself, from the style of clothes you usually wear to the car you drive, the way you walk and how you speak. If you wear contacts, get glasses. If you liked football, don't go to matches – and if you must, at least follow a different team. Read a different newspaper. If you're vegetarian, swallow hard and eat meat. It's not just about creating a new look, you have to lose the old look and all the old habits as well. This is doubly important if you think people may be hunting for you.

You're going to have to change your mental identity too. Don't think of your new name as a mask or a disguise – from this point on it's the new you. The new clothes, the new hairstyle, the new way of speaking are who you are now. You have re-invented yourself: the old you doesn't exist any more. If you keep looking over your shoulder and wondering when you can go back to your old ways, then you're asking to be caught. People notice sudden changes in attitude, mood and dress.

Changing your location is the simplest part of the whole business. For that



Call Bizarre Stories now

and you could listen to the private thoughts of particularly crap Dr Who monsters like Cybermen and Ice Warriors*

This is how it works: you **call 0660 66 40 66** (not that we think you're stupid and can't remember numbers, or anything). You can listen to the strange tales other **BIZARRE** readers have felt compelled to reveal, leave your comments, or tell us your own most bizarre experience. The best tales we get will be printed in the mag. We're particularly interested in hearing about the maddest thing you've ever done, whether it's train-surfing or drinking a bucket of vomit.

If you leave your contact number, we may even phone you up and interview you. On the other hand, so may a load of nutters who've also rung in. Forget that idea, then... Oh, and you pay 50p per minute for the privilege, a small proportion of which goes into the **BIZARRE** coffers. But, hey, you might get to be famous!

* Not guaranteed. In fact, extremely unlikely.



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reason it's a good idea to travel to a neutral place, change identities there and then go to your final destination. You can cross most European borders with nothing more than an identity card these days. Go somewhere you won't be recognised, and where a stranger won't attract attention. Other than that, your choice of destination only depends on how much paperwork you're prepared to obtain for your new self.

If you want to get false documents like a passport, there are various ways of doing it: changing some real documentation; forging a completely new set – increasingly risky, unless you can afford to pay a brilliant forger who can do magnetic strips as well as paperwork; or paying an off-shore agency to get a foreign passport for you (it'll be in your current name). Or you can persuade someone who doesn't want a passport to let you obtain one in their name.

This is a technique drug dealers use, and the notorious former drug-baron Howard Marks describes how easy it can be: "I needed someone who knew I was using his passport... and would back me up in whatever way was needed.... The Tunncliffes truthfully filled in their passport application forms and took photographs of themselves. Their local doctor signed both photographs and forms as being authentic. They

gave the signed forms and photographs back to me. Phil Sparrowhawk got a rubber stamp made which approximated that of the Tunncliffes' doctor. Judy and I then filled out new passport application forms in our own handwriting. In appropriate handwriting, Phil filled out the doctor's bit on the form and on photographs of me and Judy, and rubber-stamped them.... Passports bearing our photographs were delivered to the Tunncliffes' Birmingham address in ten days."

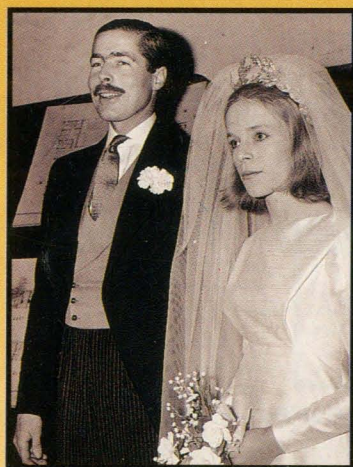
Passports are fine for fleeing the country, but you've got the rest of your life to think of too. If you plan to live out the rest of your days on a remote hippy commune then you won't need any paperwork at all, but generally you'll need a legal identity for your new self – a National Insurance number if you're planning to work (otherwise you'll have to stick to cash-in-hand jobs), a passport if you're planning to travel, bank accounts and so on. All of these depend on the new you having a birth certificate.

Most people imagine that when someone creates a false identity for themselves, they just invent a new person. Not so. The system is far too sophisticated for that unless you're an expert computer hacker and document forger. It's much safer to go the 'dead baby' route.

Everybody born in this country is issued with a birth certificate, and for a measly £6 you can obtain a copy of anybody's. There are problems if you nick the identity of someone still alive – they'll notice – so you're after a dead person: someone who'd be the same age as you, but who died before they could leave any kind of paper-trail. Visit the Family Records Centre in London, hunt through the records until you find the right dead baby, and apply for a copy of their birth certificate. You may be asked a few questions about why you want it – you're researching your family history and they were a distant cousin, of course. Choose the certificate with care: this person is the new you.

Once you've got one valid ID, you can use it to get others. You'll also need an

Lord Lucan



The name 'Lord Lucan' has become a byword for successful disappearances: despite a high-profile manhunt in several countries Lucan can't be found. And nobody can prove that he isn't dead either.

On 7 November 1974, a man broke into the London house of Lucan's estranged wife and battered Sandra Rivett, their children's nanny, to death. It's generally accepted that the killer was Lucan and that he mistook the nanny for his wife – he was seen in the house shortly afterwards, where he assaulted his wife. It's then known that he drove south to Sussex, where he stayed with his

friends the Maxwell-Scott family for two hours and wrote several letters, in which he claimed that he had interrupted a fight between the nanny and another man, was sure he would be blamed for the murder, and was going to 'lie doggo' for a while. Then he disappeared. His car was found near the docks at Newhaven, suggesting suicide.

Roy Ranson, who investigated the murder of Sandra Rivett, believes that Lucan fled to Africa via Portugal. Witnesses have claimed to have met a man resembling and claiming to be Lucan in South Africa and Kenya. In 1980 a former friend of Lucan's was killed in a car-accident in Essex, and in his address-book police found an address for 'Lord Lucan', at a hotel in Mozambique. The staff recognised pictures of Lucan, and the Maxwell-Scotts had visited the same hotel in April 1975, five months after Lucan disappeared. There have also been sightings of a Lucan-alike in Botswana.

Assuming Lucan did flee from Britain, his disappearance is almost perfect. There is not a single shred of reliable evidence to say where he ended up, or whether he is dead or alive. How he managed it, if he managed it, is a mystery to conspiracy fans, but an inspiration to those planning their own disappearance.

Did right

- ✓ Vanished almost instantly
- ✓ Left no traces except three letters
- ✓ Hasn't been found

Did wrong

- ✗ Killed someone, and the wrong someone at that
- ✗ Relied on other people too much

Agatha Christie



Agatha Christie is the world's most successful author of mystery stories. Few people recall that she was at the centre of a mystery of her own.

In 1926 Christie, aged 35 and with six whodunits already published, discovered that her husband had fallen in love with a colleague's secretary and intended to get a divorce.

Christie, already under strain from her mother's recent death, went into a deep depression.

On 3 December 1926 she left home in her Morris Cowley, taking no luggage with her. The following day the car was found abandoned at a Surrey beauty-

spot close to several deep ponds. The police, fearing suicide, dragged the pools to search for her body. There was no trace of her – except for a letter that Christie had posted to her brother from London on 4 December.

In fact Christie was at the Hydropathic Hotel in Harrogate, pretending to be a South African woman named Theresa Neele. It was a transparent disguise: she had made little effort to change her appearance and 'Neele' was the surname of her husband's new love. After ten days the hotel's head waiter notified the police that a woman matching Christie's description was staying there, and she was quickly unmasked. Christie and her supporters have always explained the incident as a mental breakdown. Sceptics note the amount of publicity she got, most of which portrayed her husband as the villain.

Whichever of the two explanations is true – and Christie herself never commented on her disappearance, bar a few short paragraphs in her autobiography – it seems that her attempted 'disappearance' was a cry for attention, just as many failed suicide attempts are actually cries for help. In Christie's case, it worked.

Did right

- ✓ Changed name
- ✓ Left a false trail
- ✓ Claimed she'd had a breakdown, not that she'd deliberately disappeared

Did wrong

- ✗ Didn't change appearance
- ✗ Showed interest in newspaper reports of her disappearance
- ✗ Probably wanted to be found

address you can get mail from; but you don't have to live there because nobody's going to check. Get a rent book if you can. The smallest ID is worth having, and anything with a photo on it is a plus, even if it's just a video-club membership card. You'll need a National Insurance number for a payslip or a P45, but you'll be amazed at the doors those two can open for you. A P45 means you're official, in the system, and you're prepared to work. A driver's licence is good as well, so long as you can drive. Just don't get cocky. Stonehouse did, and spent seven years in prison for his trouble.

The biggest, toughest item is the National Insurance number. Real people are automatically issued with one when they hit 16, and having it means you can claim state benefits – which is why so many fraudsters try to get one. Your motives are purer, of course, but you still need a reason why the new you has never noticed you don't have one. Blank ignorance can work if you're young enough to get away with never having needed one. Claiming you've been at college doing postgraduate work is plausible. Or pretend to be a bit dim and not know anything. Say your parents were flakes or travellers. Take it slowly. Act puzzled. Try to be helpful. Screw it up and it's jail.

You can buy a false identity too. It's risky, because you'll be dealing with criminals. You

will also have no idea of the quality of what you're getting, or what 'your' past history is, and there's a good chance you're going to get ripped off, caught in a sting, or worse. Do it yourself.

There are a few other things to think of, most of which are obvious but which need to be said anyway. First of all, don't tell anyone you're going. If you do tell someone, make sure you know you can trust them utterly. If Lord Lucan is still alive, the only reason he's managed it is because his friends have maintained their silence for over 20 years. Are you sure your friends are that trustworthy?

Once you've left an identity, forget it. Totally. Don't think about your old home; don't think about your family and how worried they are. Cut yourself off utterly; do not bow to temptation. Let the old paper trail go completely dead. Do not write to let them know that you're okay, and never, ever go back to see how they are – don't even drive down your old street. You don't know who may be watching for your return.

There are exceptions to every rule,

of course. 'Missing' people are found every year, having established new lives and new families hundreds of miles from their old homes, claiming that they suffered amnesia. Genuine bang-on-the-headitis, or a convenient excuse?

Other disappearers have found that they can safely drop their disguise:

Ronnie Biggs used a fake identity to escape the country after the Great Train Robbery, but now makes a living out of his own notoriety, safe in the knowledge that he won't be extradited despite the UK's recent signing of an extradition treaty with Brazil.

Disappearing is a last resort. It's second only to suicide as the final way out of a dead-end situation, and in a lot of ways it is like killing yourself. Even if you manage it, there will always be the sneaking paranoia that you may not have succeeded; that you left a loose thread and someone is on your trail, ready to expose you and haul you back. Or you may discover one day that there is nobody following you because nobody cares. If that idea worries you then don't even think about disappearing: you're too egocentric to succeed. Just keep your fingers firmly crossed and hope you never land up in a situation so bad that you have to consider it. **B**

Richey Manic



Just because someone disappears doesn't mean they're dead. In many cases someone will fake their death in order to stay alive. In other cases, people who disappear do stay alive – in the minds of their fans and in the press – even though they are almost certainly dead. Richey Manic is one of the latter.

Richey James Edwards,

guitarist and song-writer for the Manic Street Preachers, was last seen alive when he left the Embassy Hotel in Bayswater, London, at 7am on 1 February 1995. He did not check out, and in his room he left a note reading 'I love you', a packed suitcase and a box of Prozac. He drove from London to his flat in Cardiff, and vanished. On 17 February his Vauxhall Cavalier was found at Aust service station on the M4, close to the Severn Bridge, a favourite spot for suicides.

When Richey disappeared he left his passport in his flat. It looks like he may have driven back to Cardiff specifically to leave it – which could indicate that he wanted people to think that if he had disappeared, he couldn't leave the country. In fact, getting a false passport is all too easy. But apart from the sightings, that's the sole clue supporting the theory that he may be alive. Racked against it are the fact that Richey was depressive, spent time in mental hospitals, and had been cutting himself with blades for years.

There have been three sightings of Richey; two in Wales before his car was discovered, and one by Vyvyan Morris, a Welsh media studies lecturer, who reported that he saw Richey in November 1996, in Goa. Morris says that 'Richey' had long hair and a beard and admits that he did not speak to him, but the sighting backs up an anonymous report of Richey being at Anjuna, north of Goa.

It's the perfect enigma. He may be dead. He may not. We reckon it's the former, but we're not taking any bets.

Did right

- ✓ Didn't fake an elaborate death
- ✓ Didn't withdraw money before disappearing
- ✓ Left his passport behind – as 'evidence'?

Did wrong

- ✗ Almost certainly topped himself by jumping off the Severn Bridge

John Stonehouse



A former Labour MP, Privy Councillor and Postmaster General, John Stonehouse was a flamboyant man with a reputation for saying the wrong thing at the wrong time and a keen interest in the developing world outside Britain. In the early 1970s he tried to set up a bank for Bangladeshi immigrants living in Britain. It wasn't a success: Stonehouse lost most of his

money on it, and there were rumours of corruption and embezzlement.

In November 1974 – the same month that Lord Lucan disappeared – Stonehouse flew to Florida on a business trip. On his entry to the USA he managed to sneak through Immigration twice, once as himself and once using a false passport in the name of Joe Markham. When his business discussions in America went badly he faked his suicide, leaving his clothes on his hotel veranda and swimming out to sea. He swam a mile or so down the coast, came ashore and became Markham.

'Markham' flew to Melbourne, via San Francisco, Hawaii and Sydney. In Australia he started using a third identity, Mildoon, to set up bank accounts and then transferred funds between Markham's and Mildoon's accounts. He was soon arrested by the police who suspected he was planning to defraud the banks. They threw him out of Australia for being an illegal immigrant, and he was then tried in Britain for nicking £800,000 from the Bangladesh fund.

Stonehouse claimed the pressures of public life had given him a multiple-personality disorder. This was undermined by the fact that Joe Markham was a real person, albeit a dead one, whose name Stonehouse had used to obtain a false passport. The jury was not impressed, and Stonehouse got seven years in jail. He died in 1988.

Did right

- ✓ Planned it all out in advance
- ✓ Disappeared in a 'neutral' location, making him harder to trace
- ✓ Neatly faked suicide
- ✓ Got false identity

Did wrong

- ✗ Went too far: too many identities
- ✗ Took out life insurance first
- ✗ Was joined in Australia by his secretary, Mrs Sheila Buckley

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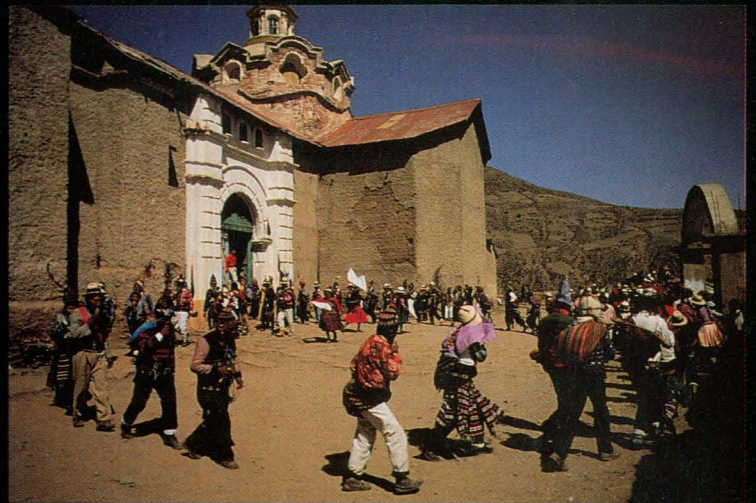


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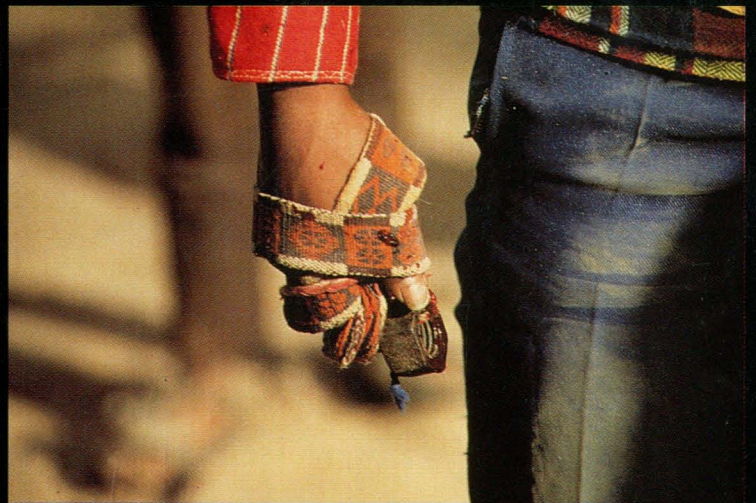
TAKE THAT, YOU WOOLLY-HATTED BASTARD

Peaceful farmers and shepherds one day, frenzied brawlers the next. OLIVIER PIGHETTI finds out why the last descendants of the Incas stage enormous, bloody, ritualised fights, often to the death



Twice a year the inhabitants of certain small villages in Bolivia's mountainous 'Altiplano' region gather for the 'tinku', a fight to the death, if necessary, in honour of the goddess Pachamama. The origin of the ritual lies in the traditional rivalry between the Masayas, who farm the fertile valleys, and the Alasayas, the shepherd people who live on the high plateaux. Before the fights, the villagers parade with crosses.

COLORIFICI



The Inca equivalent of knuckledusters: weapons aren't supposed to be used in the conflict, but the men and women, drugged by chewing coca leaves and high on 90% proof corn spirit, soon forget the few rules. ►

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Route 66



In a bizarre mix of old and new, local Catholic priest Father Andre blesses the 'tinku', or 'festival of the encounter', begging the crowd not to throw stones. The fights immediately break out in the main square, watched by a thousand spectators from nearby villages.



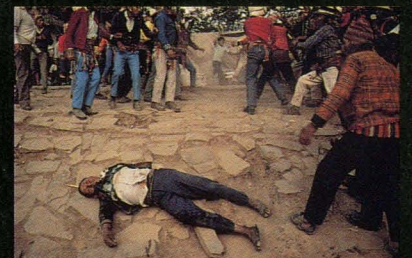
"Carajo, carajo," screams the crowd, following the fights, moving aside as bodies fly, or occasionally breaking into group brawls as men and women begin kicking the hell out of each other with steel-tipped boots.



Every year several people die, their bodies carried ceremonially before the goddess. The local authorities are powerless to stop the festivals; the La Paz government refuses to recognise that they still take place.



On the second day of the ceremony, after the fighters have spent most of the night drinking and taking coke, the violence is even more marked, especially among the women. Older women scream instructions to the fighters from the sidelines, like boxers' trainers. Chunks of rock and nails appear in hands, resulting in horrific injuries. Men walk round like zombies, blood streaming down their faces.



Despite the efforts of local police, the goddess gets her first sacrifice of the tinku. It will not be the last. **B**



BIZARRE BUYS

music,

...Shit Christmas presents

That time of year is coming, the geese are made of concrete... If you're really lacking inspiration, here's the Bizarre guide to gifts for people you don't like



Ideal for mad grannies

"It may be kind of silly, but we have a good time designing and creating them!" say Mary Davis and Barbara Litton of Goose Garb, a company which markets outfits with which to dress any 26-27"-tall concrete model geese that you may have. They're not wrong. The idea is that you dress your goose seasonally, with Christmas, Hallowe'en and other outfits available for special occasions. Davis and Litton aim to introduce the art of goose-dressing to the southern United States and beyond, via the internet (<http://bax.com/goose/>). As far as finding 26-27" geese go, you're on your own there. A typical outfit costs around \$20 (£12.50) plus shipping. Place your orders with Goose Garb, 141 Harrington Lane, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30045, USA



For your mad-eyed drug fiend friends

It's green and fluffy. It bongs around on a big spring. And it's a lamp. You know the person in your life who's best placed to receive this ace piece of tat, so bad it's kitsch. £29.95, available from The Gadget Shop, tel 01482 860860



Perfect for men you want out of your life (or masochists)



Maybe it's a macho thing, but we can't understand who in the world would stick a revolving cutter up their nose, even if they do have nostril hair like a baboon's chuff. Have these people never heard of scissors? What if it gets stuck or, worse, tangled? At least this model doesn't plug into the mains. Down there with cappuccino frothers in the 'put it in the cupboard and forget about it' stakes. £9.95, available from The Gadget Shop, tel 01482 860860



Good for shutting up hippy-dippy sisters

Everyone goes through a stage of wanting to save the world, buying lumpy pale beige 'Save the Whales' T-shirts and sniffing every time you eat a Kit-Kat cos it's made by Nestlé. As soon as your sibling hits this tedious stage, save yourself months of earnest conversations about global warming and distract them by giving them a llama walk for Christmas. They call it 'llama trekking' in the brochure, which makes it sound a bit more exciting than spending the day leading a llama across the South Downs, stopping for a picnic, and then leading it back. £39 for one, £59 for two people. Call Redletter Days on 0181 343 8822.



Lazy fathers or hyperactive mutts

Nah, it's not a replica medieval torture instrument. It's an automatic dog walker. Screw it in the ground, clip your dog's lead to the ring, and shout at it or something to start it running... and remember to dig the thing up and move it from time to time or your lawn will start looking like aliens have been leaving crop-circle messages on it. Or buy a Swingball. £7.95 from Presents for Men, tel 01295 750100

film, gadgets, the net, travel and...



Handy for nervous maiden aunts

In these days of rising car crimes (well, according to the tabloids, anyway) nervous single drivers can appear to have a car full of hunky blokes if they're willing to do a bit of blowing. These inflatable passengers come with sideburns, designer stubble and cream polo neck – for some reason they all seem to look like wimpy pop singer Rick Astley. They take a few minutes to inflate and come in a handy briefcase, for business women on the move. £69.95 from Connections, The Problem Solvers, 01273 685300

Really impress your sucky yuppy friends

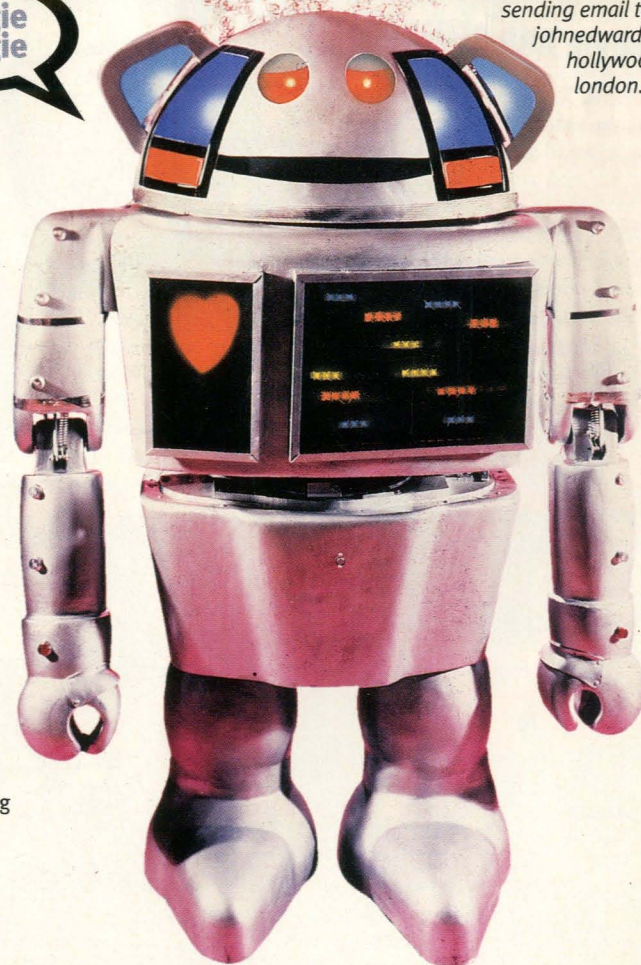
What do you give friends who've got everything? Locusts, that's what. Not as pets, but as dinner. Packed with protein, deliciously crunchy (it says here) and best of all, not very expensive. Only a couple of places in the country stock ready-cooked locusts, although you can get them live from most pet shops, where they're sold as snake-food. Cricket cookies, anyone? 69p each, from M Moen, 19 The Pavement, London SW4. Tel 0171 622 1624



Scare small children

He can turn his head through 360 degrees, and he tells jokes and sings, if you're really unlucky. And he says "boogie boogie" a lot. He is, of course, Metal Mickey, star of early-1980s TV, and not to be mistaken for the annoying little robot from Buck Rogers who said "biddy biddy biddy".

You can hire Metal Mickey for your party by calling JJ on 0181 806 4114 or sending email to johnedward@hollywood-london.com



Make your fat friends squeal like a pig

Torment your lardy mates by giving them a pink plastic 'snack bowl' in the shape of a pig. Not only is it a rather ugly object, it also makes oinking noises every time you go to take a crisp thanks to battery-powered 'touch-free technology'. You'll just have to take our word for it, however. For some strange reason the picture on the box shows the bowl filled with Shreddies: evidently a new trend for all you snack sophisticates who are fed up with Hula Hoops and Quavers.

£21.95, available from The Gadget Shop, tel 01482 860860

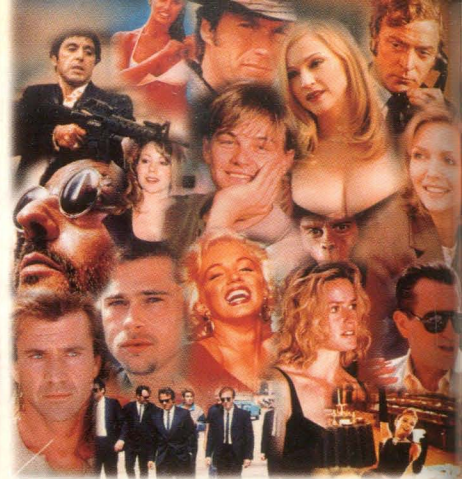


Encourage your little brother to fart

Does it really detect farts? Who knows? Who cares? With this cousin of those little boxes that swear when you point them at people, but a damn sight chunkier and more expensive, they can fantasize they're zapping Klingons with it too until the annoying American voice says "Warning! Fart Detected! Whooo! Whooo!" Very amusing. £29.95 from the Gadget Shop, tel 01482 860860



A composite image of four actors: George Clooney, Al Pacino, Tom Cruise, and Keanu Reeves, all dressed in tuxedos. Al Pacino is holding a handgun.



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JOHN WAYNE	50	78
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BRUCE WILLIS	44	22

***Number of different poses available are stated after star name.**

Three movie posters are displayed in a collage. The leftmost poster is for 'The Hot Chick' featuring Brad Pitt. The middle poster is for 'Teri Hatcher' featuring Teri Hatcher in a white dress. The rightmost poster is for 'Louise' featuring Louise Linton. The posters are tilted and overlap each other.

A collage of five signed photographs of actors. The photos are arranged in a cluster, overlapping each other. The actors shown are George Clooney (holding a glass), Ryan Reynolds (in a suit), Jennifer Aniston (smiling), and two other actors whose names are not clearly identifiable. Each photo has a signature in blue ink.

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EDITED BY ANDREW LITTLEFIELD

Bizarre movie couples MONSTER MISMATCHES



1. I Married A Monster From Outer Space (1958
Dir: Gene Fowler)
The Plot: On her honeymoon, Gloria

Talbot discovers that handsome new husband Tom Tyrone is actually a bug-eyed monster. No one believes poor old Gloria, and before you can say 'Marriage Guidance Counselling' Tyrone is trying to bump off the missus and enslave planet Earth.

Chance Of Future Happiness:

Slight. The marriage remains unconsummated, the aliens have other imposter hubbies lined up.



2. The Honeykiller
(1969 Dir: Leonard Kastle)
The Plot: One of Martin Scorsese's favourite films,

this b&w cult classic, based on a true story, is the only movie that director Leonard Kastle ever made. Skinny lounge lizard Ray Hernandez (Tony LoBianco) meets plump nurse Martha Beck (Shirley Stoler) through a Lonely Hearts column and they embark on a gruesome murder spree.

Chance Of Future Happiness:

Toast. Martha and Tony were executed in 1951 for the murder of three women and a baby.

3. Harold And Maude
(1971 Dir: Hal Ashby)

The Plot: Eccentric OAP Maude (Ruth Gordon) seduces rich but death-obsessed teenager Harold (Bud Cort). The swinging granny teaches her inexperienced young boyfriend all about love and life. *Harold And Maude* anticipates the senior citizen chic of Pulp's new single 'Help The Aged'.

Chance Of Future Happiness:

Crumbly. With Maude pushing 80, this isn't a long-term relationship.



4. Max Mon Amour (Max My Love) (1986
Dir: Nagisa Oshima)

The Plot: Charlotte Rampling cheats on her repressed diplomat husband with a chimp called Max. The first inter-species romantic comedy, courtesy of Jap rumpy-pumpy merchant Nagisa Oshima, who also directed arty bonkbuster *In The Realm Of The Senses*.

Chance Of Future Happiness:

Beastly. Max turns out to be a rather inconsiderate lover, leaving Rampling unsatisfied by man or ape.



Slack attack

Clerks director Kevin Smith's back with an off-beat flick about cartoon love

LESBIAN LUST. Dope-smoking superheroes. Injuries received while performing oral sex. A black radical who reckons *Star Wars* is George Lucas's white imperialist fantasy. All this and more is crammed into director Kevin Smith's latest flick *Chasing Amy*.

Smith sure thinks it's good to talk; his dialogue-heavy scripts are stuffed full of the kind of pop-cult chat that often passes non-American audiences by. At its UK premiere one of the film's funniest sequences, a debate about the hidden homosexual subtext of 'Archie' comics, barely raised a titter.

Chasing Amy completes Smith's loose 'Jersey' trilogy, begun by *Clerks* (1994) and the straight-to-video flop *Mallrats* (1995). Holden McNeil (Ben Affleck) and Banky Edwards (Jason Lee) are two twentysomething cartoonists who publish the comic 'Bluntman and

Chronic'. At a convention they meet Alyssa Jones (Joey Lauren Adams), the lesbian creator of 'Idiosyncratic Routine'. When Holden finds himself falling in love his career and his lifelong friendship with the uptight Banky are thrown into chaos. After learning about Alyssa's colourful sexual history, Holden also realises he isn't as broad-minded as he'd like to be...

Clerks fans will love the reappearance of dude double act Jay (Jason Mewes) and Silent Bob (Smith). But while the boys still get most of the best lines, *Chasing Amy* isn't just another buddy-buddy yuck-fest. Smith handles the film's complicated sexual politics deftly, and makes the romance between Holden and Alyssa believable and touching.

After the relatively expensive (\$6m) *Mallrats* received a critical pasting, Smith returned to his low-

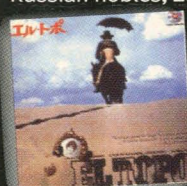
budget roots for *Chasing Amy*. The film won a standing ovation at the Sundance Festival. Smith says, "People ask me if I feel redeemed. I don't. I just feel vindicated." He's now working on another inexpensive comedy, this time set outside the New Jersey universe of his first three pictures.

While he continues to steer clear of the mainstream, Smith did write the *Six Million Dollar Man* remake, and his love for comic books resulted in a commission to pen the new *Superman* movie, to be directed by Tim Burton and starring Nicolas Cage. Neither script now looks likely to be filmed, possibly because, Smith admits, he ignored action in favour of dialogue. Frankly, the thought of Clark Kent or Steve Austin discussing the niceties of group sex or the merits of Slayer albums sounds a lot more fun than yet another dumb action film.

Most bizarre films ever

2. El Topo

El Topo: so rare that one NY video library used to demand a \$500 deposit before lending it, it's a cryptic mix of mysticism, sex and crucified sheep. A cowboy antihero and his naked nine-year-old son meet Russian nobles, Zen masters



and nude women. Probably made more sense in 1970.



Chasing Amy: blondes have more beer

EDITED BY MARK BLACKLOCK



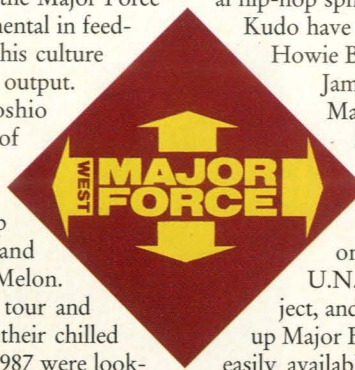
TOKYO IS A COOL city, inhabited by salarymen and office ladies by day, and by beat-boys and girls boasting the freshest and most outlandish skate and hip-hop fashions by night. In the hippest parts of town such as Shibuya and Shinjuku, the street culture is palpable. Since the end of 1987 the Major Force record label has been instrumental in feeding the ravenous hunger of this culture with its highly funky creative output.

In the mid eighties, Toshio Nakanishi, ex-member of Plastics, a Japanese band who toured with the likes of Talking Heads, teamed up with DJ/producers Gota and Masayuki Kudo to form Melon. Melon had some success on tour and gained quite a following for their chilled and laid-back sound but by 1987 were looking for something new. With the recruitment of Takagi Kan and Hiroshi Fujiwara, the artists behind punky hip-hop group Tiny Panx, Major Force was born.

Major Force releases are diverse and idiosyncratic. Classic instrumental hip-hop tracks, notably Return of The Original Artform, dub and trippy house – the range of the output illustrates the far-reaching aims of Major Force. The label is uniquely Japanese in its style but

has always been global in its outlook, collaborating with big names such as Red Alert Productions, Soul II Soul (Gota programmed the drums on 'Keep on Moving') and the Beastie Boys, who Kudo cites as a major inspiration – white boys from outside the traditional hip-hop sphere. More recently Toshio and Kudo have been working with beat heads Howie B and James Lavelle.

James has always been a fan of Major Force, so much so that he says the label inspired him to set up his own increasingly popular and prolific Mo'Wax imprint. Kudo was one of the first members of U.N.K.L.E., James' recording project, and together with Toshio they set up Major Force West to make their music easily available to Western audiences. And now Mo'Wax releases a 32 track anthology, mapping the highlights of the Major Force catalogue. James Lavelle expects the trainspotters to be out for his blood as all of a sudden hard-to-find records will be sold in one handy package, but frankly he has done us all a favour. This jazzid and funky Jap-hop compilation, consisting mostly of tracks nearly a decade old, amply demonstrates just how darn street-cool these guys are. Major Force be with you.



The label is Japanese in its style but global in its outlook

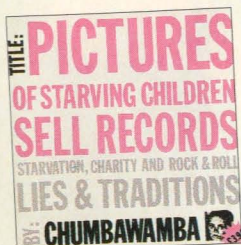
GIVEAWAY!

The lovely Ninja Tunes people and BIZARRE offer 5 readers the chance to win some groovy Ninja Skinz, choc full of rolling papers, roaches and freak wisdom. Simply answer the following question: Who went to number one with the song 'The Only Way is Up'? Send entries marked 'Stoned Fool' to the editorial address on page 89.



BIZARRE OLD FOLK 5. Chumbawamba

The sleeve notes of their 1986 album *Pictures of Starving Children Sell Records* read: "...Pepsi-Cola, Thorn EMI, etc. are all directly involved in oppressing and suppressing the poor countries... Stop pretending that flaunting our capitalist Rock & Roll and selling sweatshirts can change things." In 1997 the Chumbies' single 'Tub-thumping', on EMI, hit the charts at number 2. So Chumbawamba, did EMI change or did you?



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Various

The Spirit of Vampyros Lesbos



Soundtracks to various Jess Franco movies reinterpreted in a modern dancefloor

stylee. Sideburn Recordings have brought in a roster of top quality remixers to translate these 'sleazy listening' numbers into the nineties. Grooving techno, cool breaks and some wiggled out electronica are all instilled with an Italian porno feel. When you hear the names involved (Weatherall, Christian Vogel, Dr Rockit) you should be out the door and on the way to your local vinyl merchant.

The Tiger Lillies *Farmyard Filth*



An album which opens with the immortal line "I love a little hamster up my rectum..."

is always going to get a reaction. Whether it is one of glee or despair

will very much depend upon your taste for amphetamine-accordion, Euro-folk guitar and Dame Edna vocal-led ballads to zoophilia. Silly and puerile but with genuinely hilarious moments. Imagine the Wurzels a bit more intimate with their livestock and even more aware of their own absurdity.

Extreme Music from Africa



White noise, intense-to-the-point-of-bursting polyrhythms and effected chant sounds make this CD an ear-damaging mindfuck. Culled and collected from various African nations through extensive research, apparently, it could just as easily be the work of one man with his studio set to distort. Walking the tightrope between experimental and unnecessary, this sort of music will help you achieve an altered state of mind, and that alone makes it worthwhile. Also available is a sister CD, *Extreme Music from Japan*, featuring some suitably twisted sleeve artwork.

Various

Hasta Siempre Comandante



Fidel Castro reads aloud a letter from Che Guevara written before his last

mission in 1965 and outlining his hopes for the Revolution. The finest in Cuban musicians play Latin rebel ballads and the occasional funky samba rhythm. We should all respect Che, if not for his politics then for the revolutionary life he led. The passion he has inspired in Cuba is evident in this collection of songs. For those of us who don't understand Spanish, listening out for mentions of his name provides a good laugh.

Lucky 15

Colour Code White



A cheeze-listening disco remix of the Monkey TV series theme tune earns this CD a mention here. The rest is not up to the same standard of foppery.

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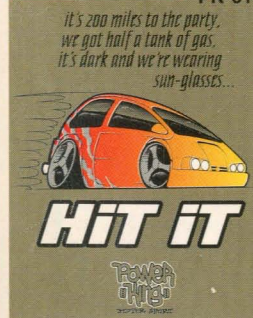
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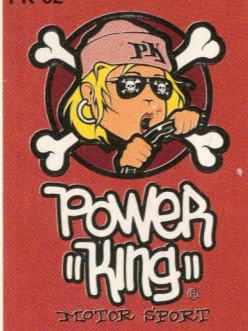
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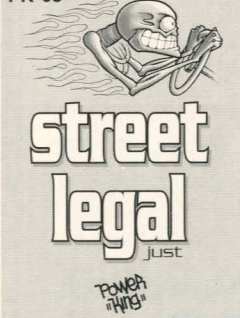
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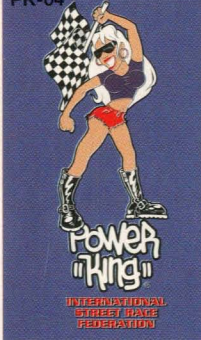
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EDITED BY JOHN INNES

Games review

LAST BRONX



We're getting into fighting games in the BIZARRE offices as a way of releasing our pent-up emotions and

exorcising our violent tendencies. Right. *Last Bronx* is one of Sega's high-resolution games, which means it looks better than the standard fare. More than that, it's big fun to play. It takes time to get the hang of the moves, but if you fancy beating the shit out of someone with a mallet then this is for you.

(Saturn, £39.99, Sega)

ABE'S ODDYSEE



In this game you play Abe, a bug-eyed worker in an alien meat-packaging factory. You find out your people are to be turned into 'Tasty Gristle Treats' and decide to organise a breakout.

Wandering around the plant, your job is to persuade others to follow you, while avoiding trigger-happy guards. What makes this game something special is the fantastic character animation and the ability to control Abe's (frankly limited) vocabulary. And you can make him fart too.

(Playstation, £44.99, Coalition)

DEMENTIA



'Dementia - it's a state of mind'. Apart from its poor tag line, this game is pretty good. Its main character is an octogenarian granny who keeps all her worldly goods in her bra. Granny has lost her family and has to navigate through her

Alzheimer's-riddled world to find them. Unusual.

(Wing5, £39.99, Telstar)

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

Strategy games are usually much of a muchness. Set up your tanks, let the game fight it out for a while, tweak your plan, sit back for a while, and so on. What lifts this one way above the usual offerings are the splendid 3D renderings of the vehicles and scenery. It's like something off Newsnight, only without the smarmy presenters.

(Wing5, £34.99, GT Interactive)

Game babes



Easy Raider

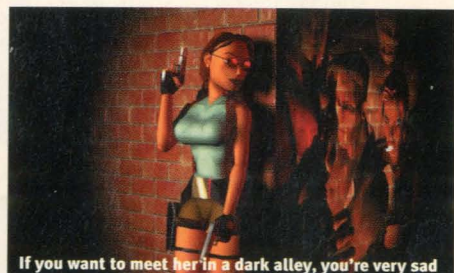
LAST YEAR Eidos Interactive released *Tomb Raider*, the smash-hit computer game starring babe archaeologist Lara Croft. Now, a year later, *Tomb Raider II* is about to be released and Lara is everywhere. Eidos have contracted actress Rhona Mitra to play the character at publicity events, and a single with Dave Stewart is due out in November. It's hype on a scale that would boggle even Mario and Sonic.

Two months after the original game was released its creators Toby Gard and Paul Douglas vanished into a cloud of rumours and tales of fall-outs, publicity scams and financial wranglings with Eidos. Now the two have resurfaced with their own company, Confounding Factor, and a level-headed view of *Tomb Raider*. "It's not exactly the new Oasis album, is it?" they told BIZARRE.

You'd expect Toby (graphics) and Paul (computer whizz-kiddery) to be swimming in royalties, but that all stopped when they left Eidos. As the Lara phenomenon grew they found their control of the



Lara Croft: every game-boys' favourite Uzi floozy



If you want to meet her in a dark alley, you're very sad

character was dwindling and decided to bow out of Eidos and set up their own company. As Paul says, "We could have stayed there, sat around, done nothing, got paid, and milked it, but we wanted to produce good games. If we'd wanted the money we would have done *Tomb Raider II*, because whatever it's like, it's a guaranteed success."

Meanwhile a huge Lara Croft marketing machine has been in action. Paul tells of seeing Rhona Mitra dressed as Lara at a computer fair. "People were pushing each other out of the way to see her. It's strange. We created her, but she's out of our hands."

Toby and Paul's next game, codenamed 'Leviathan', is planned for 1999. "We've just crystalised what we want to do," says Toby. "We're very pleased with the concept."

"Before you ask," says Paul, "it won't be another female character - because everyone's doing that. 50% of game publishers are ripping off *Tomb Raider* already. We don't want to be predictable."

Gadget corner

The strange world of things that nobody needs but everybody wants...

Telephone Voice Changer

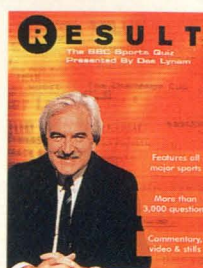
Problem: you've kidnapped your boss's kids and are about to make the ransom call. How do you make sure he doesn't recognise your voice? Hankie over the mouthpiece? Nope, he'll think it's you, with a cold. Cotton wool in your mouth? No, you'll choke. The only sensible solution is this electronic voice changer. Slap it on the mouthpiece,



turn it on and you sound like Barry White's big brother. Or with the press of a button you become one of the Bee Gees on helium. Top fun, even if you're only using it to prank-call your mates. JIN Electronics (0181 508 9701), £35

Result

Not strictly a gadget, not strictly a game, more like the technological incarnation of your worst nightmare. Imagine the scene: you're sitting in a darkened room, being fired increasingly difficult sports questions by kindly old Des Lynham. Does he



pause, does he say, "Now let's watch some footie for 45 minutes"? No he doesn't, but it's bloody good fun all the same. And give thanks to all that you hold holy that they didn't use Jimmy Hill. BBC Multimedia, £29.99

Electronic Deep Sea Fishing

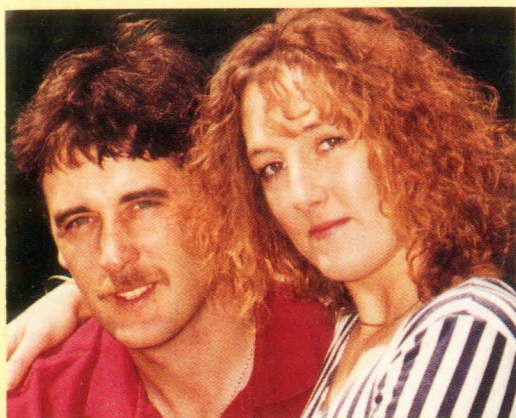
This year's must-have executive toy gives you the chance to brush up your deep-sea fishing without the hassle of getting into a boat. Or leaving the house. Or knowing anything about fishing. Pit your wits against sailfish, spearfish, swordfish or marlin. Hemingway must be reeling in his grave. Innovations (0990 807060), £29.95



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Attractiveness:

Very attractive ☐ Attractive ☐ Average ☐

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Private / Public ☐ Grammar ☐

Comprehensive ☐

Secondary Modern ☐

O levels / GCSE's ☐ A levels ☐

Further Education ☐

University / Prof. Equivalent ☐

Technical Qualification ☐

4. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

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☐ Serious ☐ Practical

☐ Considerate ☐ Conventional

☐ Shy ☐ Reliable

☐ Romantic ☐ Adventurous

5. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank if you don't feel strongly)

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☐ Are you interested in current affairs?

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Build: slight ☐ medium ☐ large ☐

Attractiveness:

Very attractive ☐ Attractive ☐ Average ☐

Dept. BIZ 05

Please answer the questions above, cut out this page and send it to us at:
Dateline 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AL or call us now on 01 869 324 100

EDITED BY JOHN INNES

Problem pages

When push comes to shove and the going gets tough, you can always rely on a good agony aunt to shove her oar in. BIZARRE, or rather disturbed of Bracknell, went in search of some words of wisdom.

Da Juana Byrd's Psychic Advice Line

www.cdbbyrd.com/pal/

Da Juana, apparently a clairvoyant and hypnotist, advertises specialist advice gleaned from her contact with 'those no longer living'. The idea is that if you have a problem, she can contact someone who has 'passed on to the other side' who has already experienced it, and ask their advice. Does it work? Da Juana's advice to a troubled reader who misses a dead relative and would like to say goodbye properly: "Be prepared to smell his odour or hear his voice. That usually happens when dead entities want to let you know they are around." All major credit cards accepted.

Tell it to Trish

www.match.com



Trish McDermott works for match.com, one of the internet's commercial dating agencies, but offers a free advice service on relationships and dating in general. Her advice is pretty sound, if

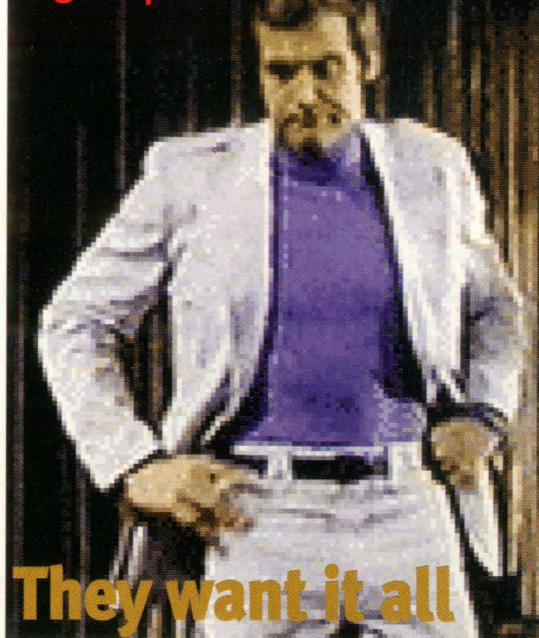
over-Americanised. If at the end of an evening your date turns to you and says, "Thanks so much for meeting with me today. It was fun to spend this time together and you seem like a terrific person. I really appreciate your effort. I just want you to know that I don't get a sense of any real 'fit' between us and I'd like to make this date our last one. I want to thank you again, though. Can I walk you to your car?" then you know they've been consulting Trish.

Ask Isadora

www.askisadora.com

Isadora Alman, the author of *Enjoying Sex (With Physical and Emotional Safety)* and regular columnist for the *Fairfield County Weekly*, provides the home for a live chat service where people can talk about their problems in small groups. BIZARRE road-tested the service by logging in as 'Ginger', a young Scottish girl with a question about an overly ardent penpal. Some of the group said, "Let them down gently"; others said, "Be brutally honest". Meanwhile, most of the male members tried to chat up poor young Ginger, one with the immortal line: "You like to tease, don't you?"

Digital pack-rats

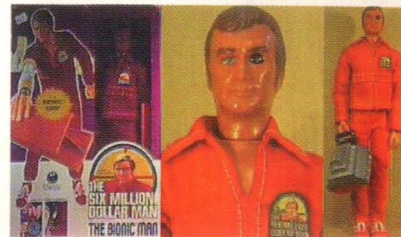


They want it all

If you've got it, flaunt it. Or not. It all depends what your private obsession happens to be

ONE DAY everything is fine, you've got a nice hobby, a girlfriend and a life. Then one morning you wake up and find that you're a drooling obsessive with no friends, all because of the day you said, "Oh, that's a nice pencil sharpener, I think I'll hold on to that..." Three years later you're surrounded by thousands of the things, and sleep knee-deep in pencil shavings. BIZARRE went in search of the net's saddest hobbyists and found some frightening people.

Nick from Yorkshire (www.swint.demon.co.uk) stood out from the rest of the pack for his collection of 70s and 80s sportswear. "I brought a track suit in 1983 because it was 'trendy', and all my peers had one. I don't recall wearing it for any sport. Kind of posing-only



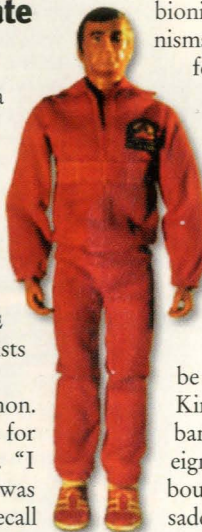
gear, I suppose." Nick now owns almost every style made in the 80s, apart from one 1986 Colorado hooded top. If you meet him at a dinner party there is only one possible course of action – leave.

Another man with far too much time on his hands is Herbert Zach, who has a collection of 4,698 cigarette packets (at www2.telecom.at/collecting/). Herbert has 253 from Austria, but only 148 from Britain. And no Player's Navy Cut – the smell of my grandfather's house.

David Lee runs the Six Million Dollar Man section of the Big Red Toybox (www.bigredtoybox.com/smdindex.htm) and says the second-hand trade in these toys is really impressive. The mid-70s figures have stood the test of time, with the bionic eye and weight-lifting mechanisms still intact on most, but Steve's foreskin-like rubber arm skin has perished on 90% of them.

Lindsay Wagner, who played the bionic woman Jamie Summers, tells of the hassles of posing for her action figure, "They measured my face – my eyes, my ears, my nose – so carefully and they made the doll. And it looked like Farrah Fawcett!"

The moral of all this? You can be sure that whatever you collect, be it Kinder toys, tin foil, stickers from bananas, antique barbed wire or foreign products with rude names, there's bound to be someone out there who's sadder than you. Thank goodness they don't get out more.

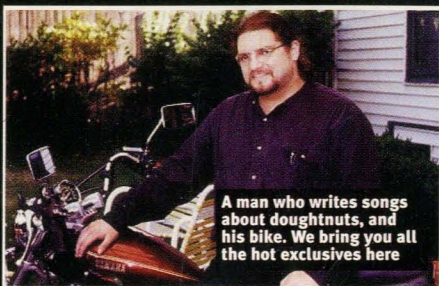


Internutter

Allen Thompson

www.teleport.com/~allent/donuts.html

Allen Thompson isn't just keen about doughnuts, he's virtually obsessed by them. Visit his web site and listen to the songs that he's written about them. All the instruments are played by Allen himself. Unfortunately,



A man who writes songs about doughnuts, and his bike. We bring you all the hot exclusives here

Top ten sites for naff pop stars

Just when you thought you'd finally been able to forget about them

1. Adam Ant Index



www.esteem.demon.co.uk/adamant/aaindex.htm
Stand and deliver? Run and hide!

4. Tiffany

www.tiffany.org
"Read about her pop-music past and her country-music future." Oh dear.

7. Milli Vanilli

www.eki.com/products/mv/milli.html
Fake band, tragically real site.



8. Bananarama

ire.ncsu.edu/jay/brama/
With "a listing of just about every version of every track".



5. Michael Ball
www.geocities.com/Broadway/2388/
Someone has far too much time on their hands.

2. The Burt Bacharach Page

studentweb.tulane.edu/~mark/bacharach.html
Essential if only for the line "A house is not a homepage".

3. Kenny Loggins

www.kennyloggins.com
Does anyone actually know who he is?

6. Blue Oyster Cult Online

j-and-a.com/boca.html
Don't fear the reaper, do fear the net site. Buck Dharma answers fans' questions.

9. Official Ultravox Website

www.ultravox.org.uk
It means nothing to me.

10. Transvision Vamp

web.syr.edu/~smsinger/trans.htm
Baby, we don't care.

FEAR AND LOTHIAN

Edinburgh may be tourist central, but there's more to explore than the dark side of the sporran and the mysteries of shortbread. **MARK BLACKLOCK** goes gonzo in the city and gets completely shedded

EDINBURGH MAY not be the first place you think of in terms of excitement, but it's a true 24-hour city, home to international film, comedy and drama festivals, and the birthplace of modern cultural icons like Sean Connery, Irvine Welsh and, er, Greyfriars Bobby. It has a reputation as a bit of a posh place, riddled with tourists and history, but the outlying areas are not recommended as destinations for day-trippers. If you are feeling adventurous and up for a ruck, however, you may well find it there – Craigmillar was the scene of a good riot a couple of years ago.

BIZARRE hit Edinburgh outside the festival season to lay bare the city under the tourist-friendly gloss. We followed the historical trail and the less historical nightlife trail, keeping an eye open for the unusual and strange. If you like the idea of 24-hour drinking and fancy an affordable break in an historic and beautiful city where every other corner is – tragically – home to a busking bagpiper, why not go and have a scoobie?

12 NOON THE PENNY BLACK

Tucked away down a crooked back alley just off Prince's Street is this beautifully sleazy pub. Follow the trail of passed-out drunks scattered Hansel-and-Gretel style by marauding bands of revellers and you should find your way there and back out again. Assuming the clientele likes you. They reacted well to the **BIZARRE** photographer whose

very vague resemblance to The King was picked up on immediately with cries of "'s fuckin' Elvis! Eh, ye're on the jukebox and ye're in here!" Why do all drunks love Elvis?

The Penny Black is a good starting point for a booze tour and an excellent illustration of Edinburgh's pleasantly relaxed licensing hours –

it opens at 5 am. This is supposedly for the benefit of postmen who work from the nearby depot, but in reality it looks like the only link the regulars might have with the postal service would be as recipients of

letters reading 'On Her Majesty's Service'. Unfortunately the Penny Black is shut all day Sunday, so it's no use for post-Saturday-night-clubbing drinkies.

1.30 PM THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

Hugely unspectacular, just a heart-shaped mosaic of cobbles on the edge of a cobbled square, it is the Heart's magical luck-giving powers which make it worth a visit. To tap into this luck, tradition says you summon up a huge mouthful of phlegm and gob it onto the ground. Try looking like a local by spitting discreetly as you walk by or be a tourist, crowd round with your chums and self-consciously hock. The luck may come in handy later, so it's worth visiting the Heart early in an Edinburgh tour.

Also here is St Giles's Cathedral, good for a little peace and quiet, and notable for a wooden carving of an angel playing

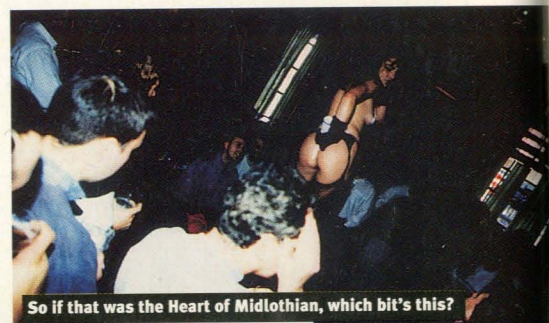
the bagpipes in the Thistle Chapel. The elderly guide told us that the pipes were missing a drone (one of the pipes) and that this was most likely a little joke on the part of the creator. Those carvers, eh, they're completely bonkers!

2 PM THE LAST DROP

Talking of bonkers, James, barman at the Last Drop, is obviously a frustrated stand-up who regaled **BIZARRE** for half an hour with tales of student mischief and hilarity. The history behind the pub's name didn't seem to affect his mood. 'The Last



Nice sporran, Warren



So if that was the Heart of Midlothian, which bit's this?



Edinburgh is the sort of city that encourages you to gob on its landmarks



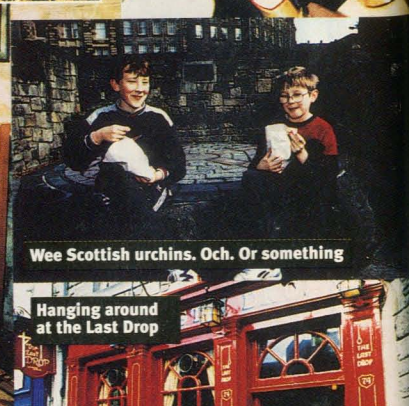
The flower of Scotland



St Giles's Cathedral. That's his mum pushing the broom



Wee Scottish urchins. Och. Or something



Hanging around at the Last Drop

Drop' commemorates the last public hanging in the Grassmarket: thousands had swung there over several centuries as punishment for crimes as varied as being Protestant or pissing off the locals – in 1736, Captain Porteous of the town guard was lynched for ordering his men to open fire on the onlookers at an execution. With a traditional and comfortable interior, the pub also serves a mean plate of haggis, neeps and tatties and the usual liquid refreshments.

3 PM THE BURKE AND HARE

On the historical trail, BIZARRE went in search of the house from which the notorious murderers and body-snatchers Burke and Hare operated.

During the early 19th century Edinburgh led the way in medical research. But researchers were only given one corpse a year, not enough for the discerning autopsist. Burke and Hare spotted this gap in the meat market and – having started out as body-snatchers – soon went into the corpse-creation business, selling their victims to unscrupulous doctors for £60 a head.

Rumbled when they killed a prostitute who was recognised by the purchaser, Hare sleazed on his

chum and literally saved his neck by turning king's evidence. Twenty-five thousand people saw Burke swing in 1829, and, in a suitably macabre twist, his corpse was given to anatomist Dr Munro for dissection. It is said the doctor's friends were given purses made of Burke's skin.

The site of the murderers' house is now a council building, but yards away is a pub bearing their name. Not just any pub, but a strip pub.

The Burke and Hare is ruled with a

velvet fist by the gorgeous Val and has a really good-natured atmosphere.

BIZARRE met financiers and computer programmers who requested anonymity, and a bunch of squaddies who wanted their photos taken.

Two strips and a stag show (ritual humiliation of

an audience member which prompted shouts of "Go on, piss on him!") later, we left having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The lesbian show was up next, but there were more pressing matters facing the BIZARRE team.

5 PM SEAN CONNERY'S BIRTHPLACE

On the corner of Fountainbridge Street and Grove Street, about eight feet above the ground, a small commemorative plaque proclaims the birthplace of Sean Connery. Sean used to deliver milk round the

city and strangely enough one of his deliveries was to Fettes School, the alma mater of James Bond. Perhaps this was a trip only for die-hard Connery fans, being fairly unimpressive and out of the way, but let's face it, the man is terminally cool. And it provides a opportunity for *Trainspotting*-style impersonations. Plaque seen and respects paid, it was time to find further refreshment.

6.30 PM THE CLOISTERS

The review of this pub which had attracted our attention described the beer and billed the barstaff as "characters". We went in search of banter and found the politely rude David, who enjoys taking the piss, particularly if a customer orders lager. This seems fair, given the quality of the White Boar beer there. The locals were extremely friendly, and John and Christine briefed us on

ESSENTIAL SCOTTISH

You may need a translation guide, depending on exactly how drunk you or they are

'Ave a scoobie – TAKE A LOOK
Pisht – SOMEWHAT INEBRIATED
Whisht – BULLSHIT
Slainth – CHEERS, CHIN CHIN,
HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE OLD CHAP
Jings! – EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE
Likesay but – Y'KNOW WHAT I MEAN
Gi'in it a wee bit – GIVING IT SOME

Scottish vocabulary – words such as 'pisht' and 'slainth' (pronounced 'slansha'), a toast, featured prominently. We were also tipped off about a free post-club party in a quarry on the outskirts of town by Tarin, and hastily scribbled down the details before moving on.

9 PM THE WITCHERY TOUR

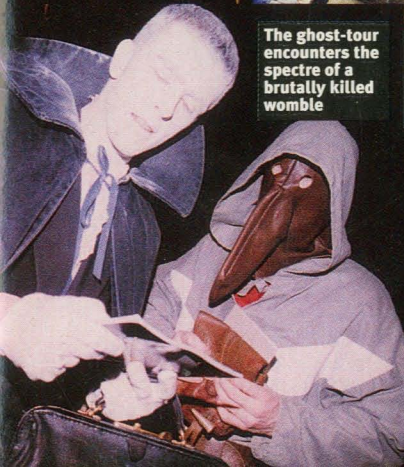
Outside the Witchery restaurant at the top of the Royal Mile, a small group is met by the ghostly figure of Adam Lyal (deceased) and the bizarrely garbed Foule Clenger, who merrily accepts their payment. Adam then guides the group around the narrow Clooses either side of the Royal Mile, scenes of several murders, telling grisly tales of hideous deeds seasoned with dry Scottish humour, and creating a hushed and expectant atmosphere which is sporadically shattered by 'jumper ooters'. The tour is expertly done and brown trousers are recommended. For the more mischievous, there is the option of taking a guess at the route of the tour and doing an impromptu 'jump oot' of your own.

11 PM THE VENUE – TRIBAL FUNKTION

Tribal Funktion is an incredibly popular and long-established dance night at the Venue nightclub, ►



A dirty old grave-robber loiters with intent



The ghost-tour encounters the spectre of a brutally killed wamble



SEAN CONNERY
Born Fountainbridge
25th August 1932
Oscar Winning Actor
International Film Star
The Scottish and more

"Mishter cold-finger, I believe?"
Sean, Sean, we love you, even if you live in Spain

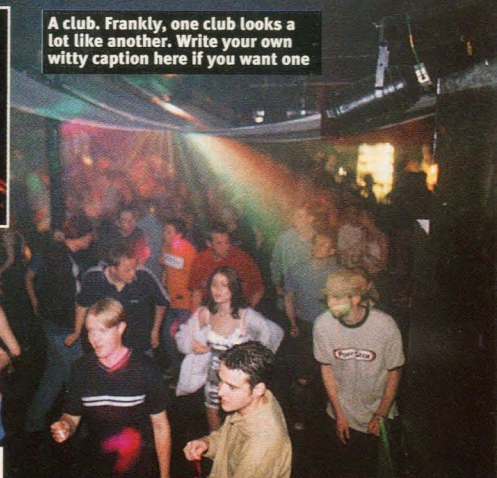
Edinburgh pubs are well stocked – at least until the BIZARRE crew arrived



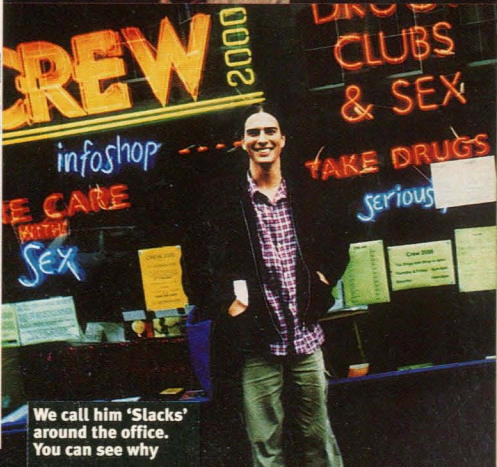
Edinburgh's rudest barman. Great banter, shame about the beard



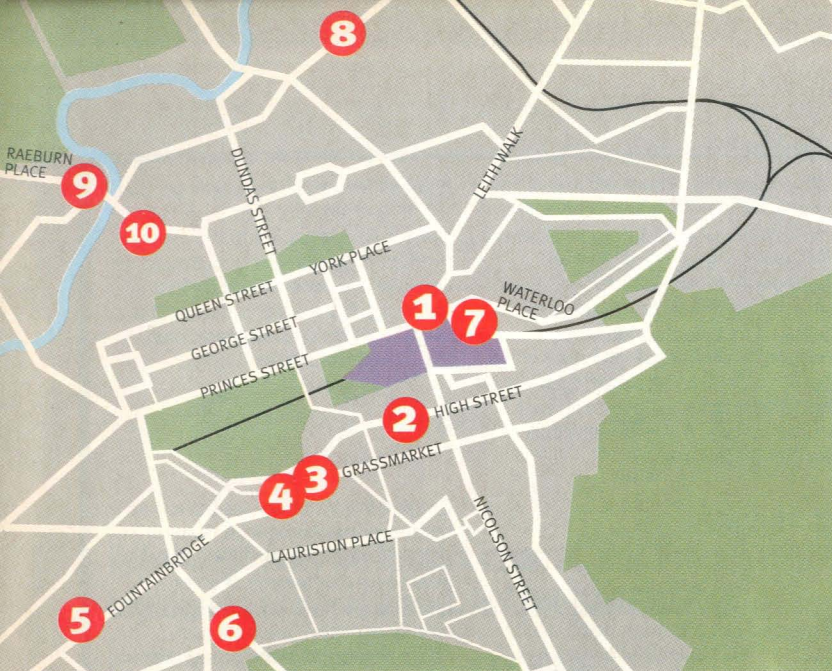
Scots skate dude



A club. Frankly, one club looks a lot like another. Write your own witty caption here if you want one



We call him 'Slacks' around the office. You can see why



EDINBURGH

- 1 The Penny Black
- 2 Heart of Midlothian
- 3 The Last Drop
- 4 The Burke and Hare
- 5 Sean Connery
- 6 The Cloisters
- 7 The Venue
- 8 Broughton Road
- 9 Maison Hector
- 10 The Floatarium

12 NOON THE FLOATARIUM

In a final attempt to shut up our sergeant-major photographer, **BIZARRE** locked him in a flotation tank for an hour and a half and played whale songs at him. The idea behind it is that you float in about six inches of concentrated saline solution inside a tank (ovular or angular, the choice is yours) to achieve sensory deprivation. Having been deprived of his senses for 90 minutes, our snapper no longer even wanted to talk. Ideal for noisy children and a come-down of the highest order.

Chilled out, worn out and hung-over, **BIZARRE** headed for Waverly Station and a five-hour train journey back to London. The plane began to look like a better option. For a full 24-hour experience, Edinburgh comes highly recommended. Likesay but. **B**

featuring drum'n'bass, house/garage and swing and hip-hop on three different floors. It's fairly standard fare with the usual guest DJs and is approaching superclub levels of lack of personality. The queues are long and cold unless you are friendly with the management, which is a high price to pay for easy entry to a very average night.

12 MIDNIGHT THE BROUGHTON TRIANGLE

The Broughton Triangle is home to many of Edinburgh's gay bars and clubs. Cafe Graffiti is a mad deconsecrated church which houses a noodle bar and hosts nights such as Arthro, an evening of dance music and poetry/book readings – closed when **BIZARRE** was in town, but there are plenty of pubs and cafes, gay and mixed, which stay open until 1 a.m. The vibe is friendly, as it is everywhere in Edinburgh, and people were still willing to talk to **BIZARRE**, despite our increasingly apparent levels of intoxication.

Half-way down Broughton Street is a chippie serving anything you care to imagine, battered. Fairly appropriate at this stage of the day. Taxis are hard to find in the early hours and the only sure place to get one is outside of Waverly Station, which can involve a fair wait. **BIZARRE** made the error

of walking back to Bruntsfield, where we were crashing, and got caught in some very 'dreek' (shit) weather but met many amusingly drunken revellers on our way. Time for some well-earned kip. Or maybe a free party?

10 AM MAISON HECTOR

Sunday brunch is a very sophisticated and effective way to recoup energy after your night's exertions and there is nowhere better to go than Maison Hector. The food is top quality – the Eggs Benedict in particular – and the staff are relaxed and friendly. The gents toilet features mirrored urinals to aid location of your apparatus, and indeed that of your fellow urinators (admit it, you looked!), although this can spin you out somewhat if you are in the grip of a serious hangover. **BIZARRE** left feeling replete and calmed, and immediately discovered the most complete wind-down activity imaginable.

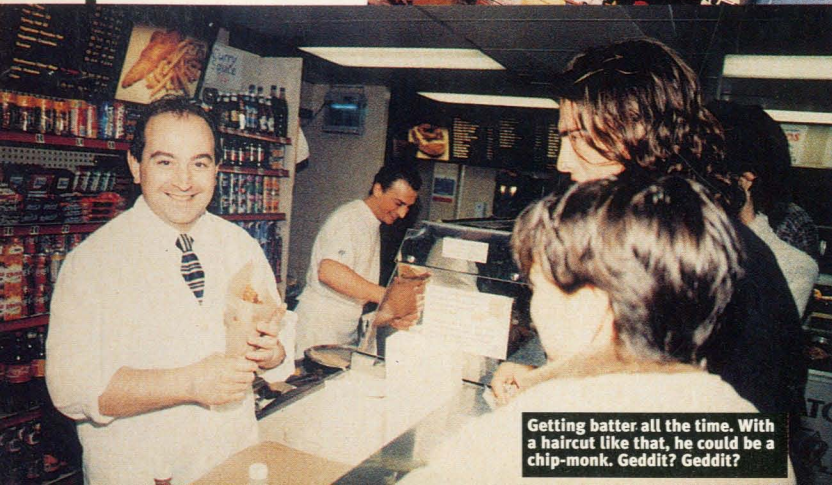


This must be that Edinburgh Fringe we keep hearing about

Edinburgh Pubic Baths



Decent coffee. Enough said



Getting batter all the time. With a haircut like that, he could be a chip-monk. Geddit? Geddit?

Big mirrors in the gents: useful for todger-locating when you're pisht



ESSENTIAL INFO

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Edinburgh Tourist Office, 0131 557 1700

GETTING THERE

From London – Easyjet (0158 244 5566) does a cheap deal flying from Luton for £29 one-way. Bear in mind that it takes about 45 minutes to get from Edinburgh airport to the centre of town, so combined with travel time to Luton the whole journey is not much quicker than the train. Book early to avoid disappointment. GNER (0345 484950) runs a regular rail service from King's Cross and once again it is advisable to book early to ensure a low price – Apex tickets are £29 return.

PLACES TO STAY

The cheapest option is a guest house and there is a wide range to choose from. The Santa Lucia (0131 6678694), at 14 Kilmaurs Terrace represents the cheaper end of the scale at £15 a night over the weekend. If you have a little more to spend, somewhere like the Dukes of Windsor (0131 5566046) is more central and costs £28 a night. All prices are per person.



GETTING AROUND

An all-day bus ticket is £2.20, but you can walk to most of the places mentioned here without too much effort. Remember that taxis are hard to find late at night, so it might be an idea to book your pick-up.

PUBS

Penny Black, 17 West Register Street.
Heart of Midlothian, Corner of High Street and West Lothian Square.
The Last Drop, 74/78 Grassmarket. Tel 0131 2254851
The Burke and Hare is at the end of the Grassmarket, start of West Port.

SIGHTS

The Sean Connery plaque can be found at the corner of Grove Street and Fountainbridge Street.
The Cloisters, 26 Brougham Street. Tel 0131 2219997
The Witchery Tour starts outside The Witchery, Castlehill, The Royal Mile. Tel 0131 2256745
The Venue is on Calton Road. Tel 0131 557 3073
Cafe Graffiti is at Mansfield Place Church. Tel 0131 557 8003
Maison Hector, 47 Deanhaugh Street. Tel 0131 332 5328
Floatarium, 29 North West Circus Place. Tel 0131 225 3350



SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND, SIR?



IF *BABE* makes you want to vomit on your sausages, try these. The new 'Maverick Directors' range from Warner Home Video (£12.99 each) features great cult directors and the coolest of cult stars: from Steve McQueen in *Bullitt* to the coolly psychotic Christopher Walken in the twisted nineties love story *True Romance*.

For sex with a serious point, embrace Ken Russell's *The Devils* or Nic Roeg's *Performance* (Mick Jagger's finest hour). Or indulge in a murder spree with Abel Ferrara's *Angel Of Vengeance*, or maybe *Badlands* with Sissy Spacek and Martin Sheen as white trash gone very bad indeed. Westerns with mean cowboys are represented by *Pale Rider* and *The Wild Bunch*; plus even meaner rednecks in John Boorman's *Deliverance*. If that isn't enough to make you squeal like a pig, there's the director's cut of *Blade Runner*, surreal slapstick with Pee-Wee's *Big Adventure* and Al Pacino hunting serial killers in William Friedkin's *Cruising*. All these re-releases are either directors' cuts, widescreen versions, or include the original cinema trailers. In many cases they're all three!

Warner Home Video are giving away five sets of this intensely cool 'Maverick Directors' cult collection, worth over £150 each, which you lucky lucky people can win by telling us on a postcard in which of the following venues Paul 'Pee-Wee Herman' Reubens was arrested for masturbating:

- a) a church b) a cinema c) a drive-in MacDonalds

Send your cards to Bizarre Maverick, John Brown Publishing, The New Boathouse, Bramley Road, London W10 6SR by 11 December 1997. This is a joint promotion run by BIZARRE and Warner Home Video.



I coulda
been a
contenduh

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**CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN, PERMED BLOKES.
YOU'LL GET YOUR COPY OF BIZARRE IF YOU ASK
YOUR NEWSAGENT TO SAVE IT FOR YOU**



Welcome aboard the **BIZARRE** letters page, flight 5 to God knows where. I am James, your steward for the journey. Letters may be edited for length. The best wins a laser-pointer; others get a Vatican condom. All letters received are considered for publication. And anyone who begs for a laser pointer won't get one. Meanwhile, we're still getting a lot of mail about our sex special...

long balls

The 'A-Z of Strange Sex' – strange, yes, but extremely funny. My friend and I sat for hours looking at 'W is for weight-training' and wondered if these men have ever heard of using their arms. Surely 85lbs attached to your testicles must hurt!

By the way, the sexy lolly (condom with ice-cubes) works extremely well – thanks for the tip!
Emma Trott, Bristol

o by gum

I especially enjoyed your article entitled 'The A to Z of Strange Sex'. If you should do a piece like that again, a good topic for the letter G would be 'gum-jobs'. This sexual practice entails a woman removing her false teeth and giving her partner the old soft chew. I can assure you from

personal experience that a blow-job from a woman with no teeth is the crown jewel of all blow-jobs. Perhaps you show a picture of a woman with her teeth out displaying a gummy grin. You could show her holding a rubber penis in her hand to suggest she is contemplating the old soft chew.
No name given, Los Angeles, USA

We could. But we won't.

leg and co

My husband and I read your 'A to Z of Strange Sex' and the resulting readers' letters about female amputees with great interest because I am an amputee myself and my husband is a 'devotee'.

He was attracted to me because of my amputation and prosthetic leg, not in spite of them, and we both enjoy a very active and unusual sex life which is centred around my missing limb.

Typically I'll show off for my husband by walking around the bedroom one-legged on crutches, wearing a mini-skirt so that the end of my stump just peeps out at each step to tantalise him.

Then after a while I'll take off my skirt and blouse and let him strap on our favourite sex-toy, a wooden peg-leg that we had made specially. I wear this with a high-heeled shoe and seamed black stocking on my remaining leg. The sight of me in my sexy undies, high heel and peg-leg drives him wild and the old-fashioned peg with all its leather straps makes me feel dead horny too.

So is sex with amputees 'strange'? Well, as an amputee I can't have sex any other way and just feel I'm making the most of my own unique body for someone who really appreciates it. As my husband says – I may only have one leg, but I now have two things up my skirt that he finds attractive!
Mrs Jane G, Epsom

gosh

Loved your feature on weird sex. However, a mention could have been given to a sexual practice I discovered whilst working as an engineer with Eurostar.

During one particularly heavy session at a gay club in Paris I met up with this French trucker who took me back to his hotel room and after the perfunctory amount of foreplay brought out a rubber tube about 10 inches long and one and a half inches wide. "Zees is what we call Chunnelling," he explained, and after greasing the inside of the tube, inserted one end into my rectum and the other into his. Then he proceeded to have a crap up the tube into my arse, and encouraged me to do likewise. It was unlike anything I'd ever experienced before – the catharsis of having a damn good shit is multiplied a thousand times when shared with somebody else, and the pleasure extended by passing the turds to and fro.

I am curious to find out how widespread this practice is in Britain, or is it purely a kinky frog fetish? Have any other readers come across (no pun intended) this one? Perhaps you could run a feature on the subject.

J Tompkins, Bristol

Thanks for bringing it to our attention, but I think we'll pass on the feature idea for the moment.

top mag – official

Do you know where I had to get issue 4 from in the local newsagent? No? I'll tell you. I had to reach onto the top shelf to remove my regular read. It was sitting right next to *Mayfair* and the shop was full so I felt quite uncomfortable.

What do the shop keepers find wrong with it? It's just like *Fortean Times*, except it's brave enough to go behind the wall.

Piss off S. L. Watts, and **BIZARRE** keep up the brilliant work.
Daniel Bauer, Devon

stocking feller

Keep up the good work but please please articles on tights. Also how about a contact section?

A J Lucas, Grimsby

No articles on tights, but our new contacts section starts this issue, in the classified ads. See, we do pay some attention to you guys.

elephant mam

I enclose a newspaper I recently purchased in Colombia as it contains a story you may find interesting. It concerns a lady named Luz Marina from Huila, Colombia, who developed inoperable benign tumours at the age of 14 but overcame all odds to marry and have a "beautiful daughter".

J H Williams, Bristol



What is this, the special Bristol-benefit letters page? But many thanks for the great story (see above for stunning front cover). Keep sending in groovy clippings, people. And Wendy Harvey – where art thou? We miss you.

Winners

Are you ready to rock and roll? We're not, but here are the latest set of **BIZARRE** competition winners anyway. Sets of **Clint Eastwood vids** go to Nigel Swan from Hornchurch and Laurence Harvey from London – nice arty postcard, Laurence. The 20 people who get sets of **Virgin Modern Icon books** are (deep breath): Ciaran Carbery (who sent us a pic of the scoreboard when Arsenal beat Man U 3-nil. Up the Arse!), Wembley; June McMeudry, Glasgow; Gary Holman, Nottingham; G. Lewis, Nottingham; Marg Vardon, Beckett; P. Cook, Cheltenham; Mark Austin, Halesowen (who wins despite sending a pic of Birmingham city centre); Dave Power, London; M. Stott, Letchworth; Cliff Haylett, Basingstoke; Clover Geoghegan, Sutton; T. O'Connell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; Mr M. S. Glassey, Philadelphia, Tyne & Wear; Mr M. Lightfoot, Stanford le Hope; Stuart Tomlinson, Herne Bay; Mr I. R. Jolley, Lewes; Mr G. Holmes, Derby (what is it with all these 'Mr's?); F. Rankin, Dumfries; Stewart Kinnon, Glasgow; and, finally, Bill Montgomery, Jordanstown. The **Smug** of their choice goes to Richard Lowke, Wednesbury; Ruth Lawrenson, Clapham, London; Simon Attewell, London; Paul Webster, Clapham, London (my spider senses tell me he may live with Ruth Lawrenson); Steve Hislop, New Hartley; Paul Merrick, Wimborne; Steve Rigby, Birmingham; Mark Austin, Halesowen; Sally Baines, Huddersfield; and Glenn Barrett, Penge. Phew!

Heidi Schley of Mitcham gets £75 worth of **holes** from the London Piercing Clinic. £40 winners are Dean Geoghegan of Sutton and Katie Thurgood of Brixton, London. S. Fitzpatrick from Hull gets a piercing in Manchester, Matt Ring from Haywards Heath is going to Crawley to get his done, along with David Pryke from Ossett – long way to go, don't they have many piercing parlours in West Yorkshire? Vince Clegg of Weston-Super-Mare gets the Bristol hole, Jenny Hills from Edinburgh wins the Edinburgh prize, and Wayne Bullivant of West Bromwich will soon be returning from Birmingham with an extra orifice. Five copies of the brilliant **Hammer Horror book** go to: Gavin Macaulay, Inverness; G. Lewis (again), Nottingham – and no, he doesn't keep winning because I lost my virginity in Nottingham many moons ago, and have a soft spot for the city – Diane Greenwood of London; H. O. O'Donnell, Nottingham; and T. O'Connell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The five groovy cats who'll be 'getting down' to the **Sons of Silence album** are Len Smith from Lincoln; Martyn Critchley, Newton-le-Willows; Jon Storey, Wateringbury; Jonathan Simon, London N2 and John Carter, **BIZARRE** reader of Coventry. Grand prize in the Fargo comp goes to Alex Truman of Nottingham, who gets a **woodchipper and video. Fargo packs** go to J. Carlisle, Harrogate; Jane Theaker, Solihull; Tom Dunn, Crediton; Miss I. Bryson, Wareham; and Mrs C. Moore, Sheffield. And dozens of you get this fabulous film on **video**, including Mike Stickel, Minneapolis USA (who won't be able to play it unless he gets a PAL VCR); Miss V. Targett, Bedford; Tony Hayman, East Barnet; M. Garden, London; Calum MacDonald, Edinburgh; Gene Guthrie, Indianapolis USA (who'll have the same problem as Mike Stickel); David Jones, Retford; M. B. Stenhouse (who says getting a copy will make his month, if not year: sweet!), Guildford; Grazyna Richmond, Southall; and, finally, T. O'Connell (again), Newcastle-upon-Tyne. M. Ficken of Ashford, Kent; Danny Miles of Shipley; Gary Holman of Nottingham; and Mr Steve Rigby of Birmingham all win pairs of extremely desirable **Rogers speakers**. We asked them to name famous musical Rogers and strangely enough Roger Daltrey featured in all their answers. **Gunsmith Cats goo guns** and video sets will be sent to David Harrison, Carlisle; Andrew Galloway, Dundee; Mr P. J. Davies, Manchester; Ian Baker, Rochester; and Robert Burton, Whitley Bay.

And two lucky people will get a set of **Woody Allen vids**: Mike Planter, Harrow and Dave Evans, Bristol. Late breaking news: remember the **crate of booze** competition in issue 1? We didn't! But we've finally pulled the winners, and they are: Alex Page, Crawley; Eva Short, London and P. Harding from Whitley Bay for the Budvar; and Martha Knowles from Bristol, Peter Clark of Swansea and Ivan Thompson from Welwyn Garden City all get crates of Two Dogs.

Looking at the winners so far I have to conclude that you stand most chance of winning if you move to Newcastle, Nottingham or Tyne and Wear. Luck to the rest of the world next time. Michael Edwards hasn't won despite complaining about people who get more than one prize – we really do pick them at random, Michael. But if you send me a complaint with your address on it I might mail you something interesting, okay?

BIZARRE

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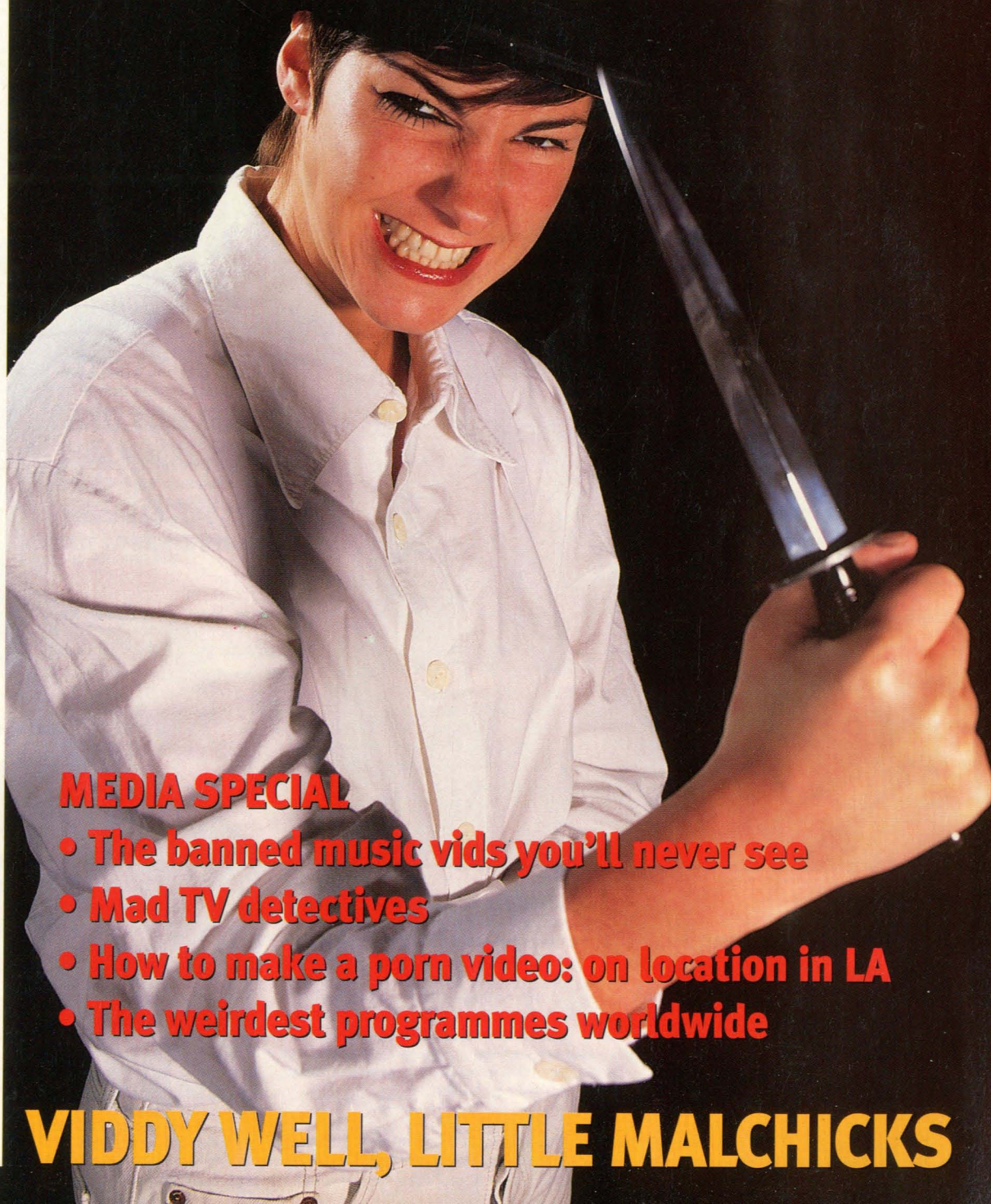
"Everybody has a right to be stupid, but some people abuse the privilege"

— JOSEPH STALIN

In issue 6, on sale 11 December

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The Bizarre guide to forbidden films,
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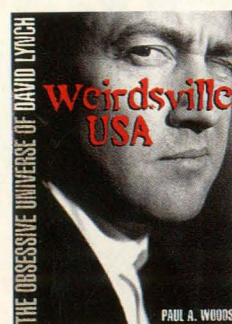
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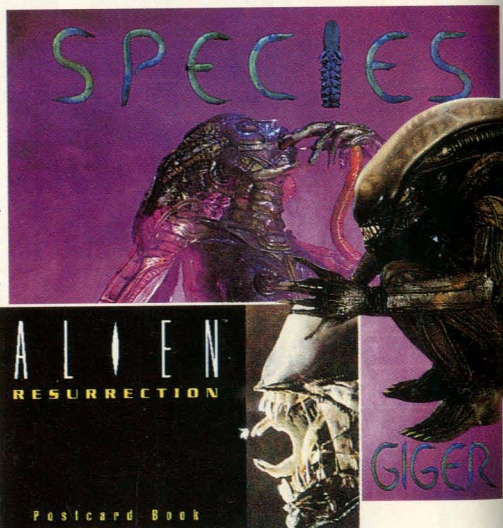
Damn fine

...book about David Lynch, this. It's by Paul A. Woods, from Plexus Publishing, and it surveys Lynch's extremely strange career and films in chronological order. *Weirdsville USA* charts Lynch's work from the Midnight Movie hit *Eraserhead*, the mainstream success of the *Elephant Man* and the flop that was *Dune* to his two archetypal studies of weird Americana, *Blue Velvet* and *Twin Peaks*. It'd set you back £12.99. However you can win one of 10 by giving us a call on **0891 771 726**

Chest-busters!

Boy, those nice people at Titan Books publish a lot of books based on the *Alien* films, including their latest about the making of *Alien Resurrection*, full of colour pics and behind-the-scenes info. Because they're so nice they've given us a copy of nearly all the *Alien* books they produce (worth £107.92, if you want to be pedantic, including lots of volumes of H. R. Giger's amazing designs for the films), plus 10 copies of their new *Alien* postcard book (worth £5.99) for the runners-up.

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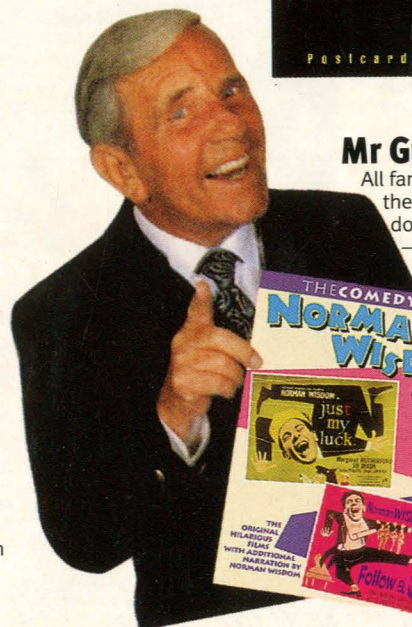
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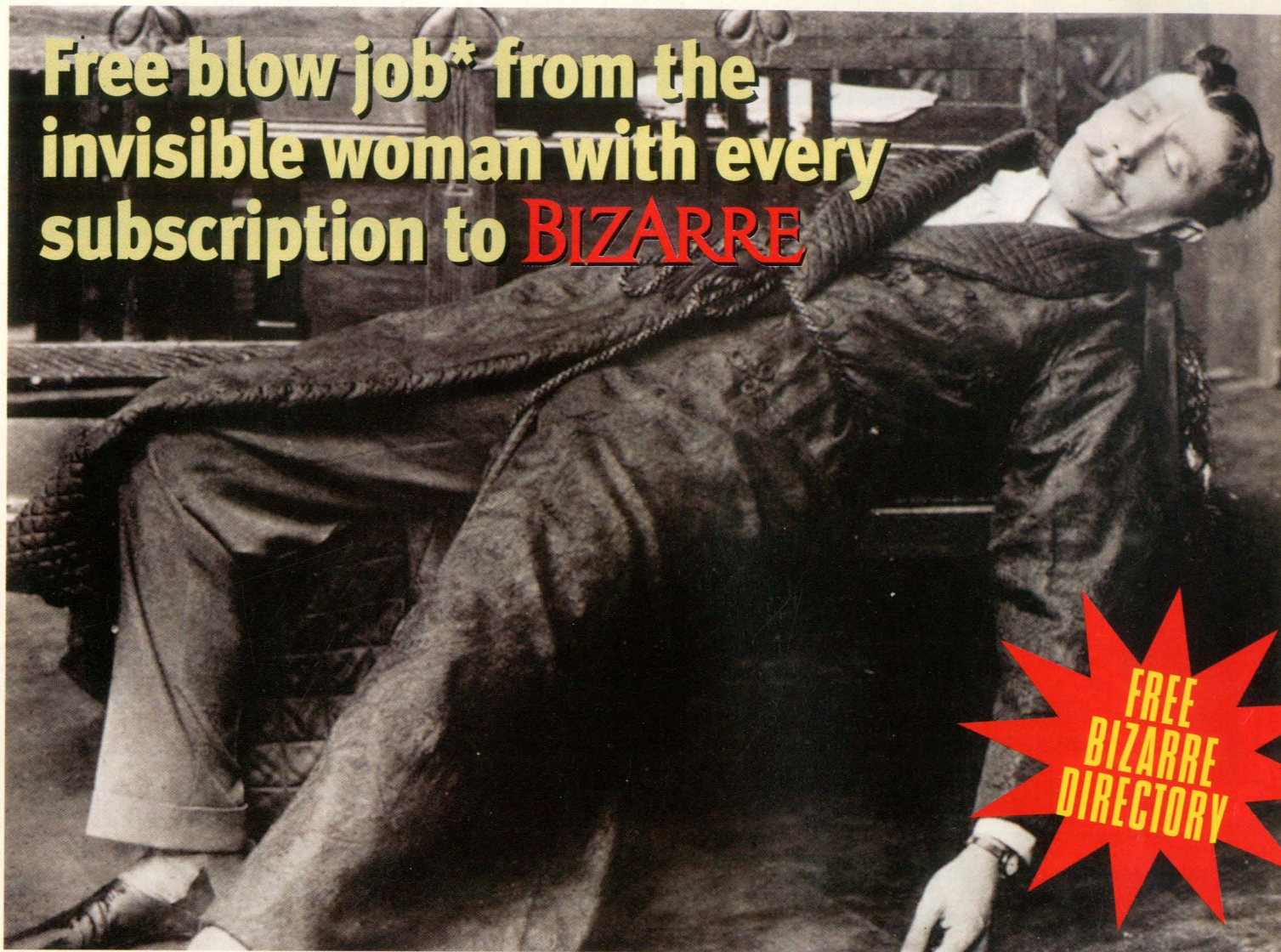


Mr Grimsdale!

All fans of Norman Wisdom - and there are quite a few of us, so don't be too quick to take the piss - will want copies of this double audio cassette, featuring two classic Wisdom shows (*Just my Luck* and *Follow A Star*), plus a video of *On The Beat*, in which Wisdom falls over a lot dressed as a policeman. We've got 10 sets worth £12.98 to give away.

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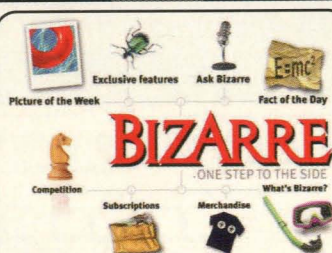
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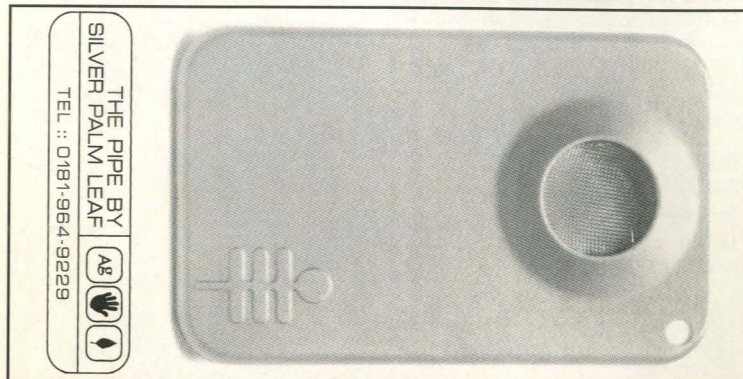
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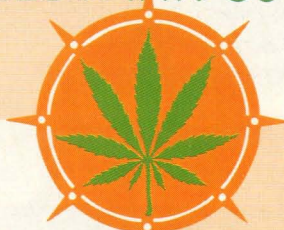
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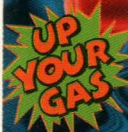
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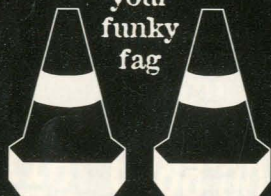
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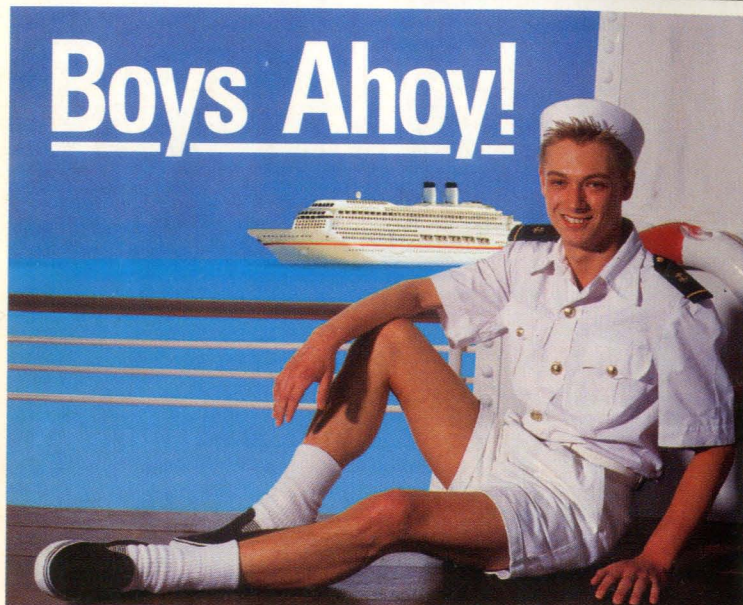
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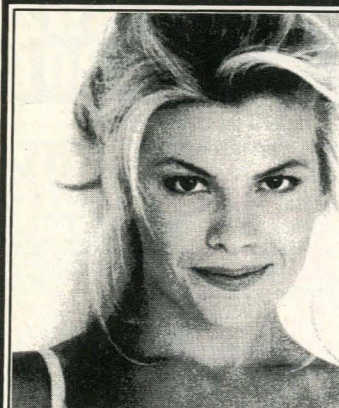


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He sang with 'the ugliest band in Britain', and invented the Madchester scene. He's been blamed for bankrupting Factory Records. He was almost killed by a crack dealer in New York. And he said "Fuck" a lot on *TFI Friday*. Bizarre asks: Fancy a shag...

Shaun Ryder

Where did you hear of Princess Diana's death?
I'd been round to me pal's. We just got in, the three of us, and it came on the news. First thing all three of us did was jump up and go "Woah, yeah, wow, fuckin' hell, wooh." I thought her sons was brave and the rest of it was bollocks.

What about Elton?

I thought he was a prick. Pretentious fucking prick.

Any favourite conspiracy theories about Di?

Think about it. No way would the British government like an Arab being the stepfather of the fucking King of England. The British and the French taught the CIA and the Russians every dirty trick they know. It wouldn't be the most ridiculous thing that the British or French government have ever done.

Is touring the rock'n'roll idyll?

You start off all right; doing a few months is great but after twelve months, the same songs

night after night... I don't like going out on stage and pretending I'm enjoying myself. Going at that pace, the straightest motherfucker ends up taking coke just to get out of bed in the morning to get the job done. I hate it when it becomes like that, you know what I mean? But I'm not going to moan about it because I love what I do - I wouldn't swop it for anything in the world.

Most bizarre tour destination?

You forget how odd places are. We've played in Iceland at a warehouse party and it was in a proper warehouse with all the fucking clothes and shoes in it. They thought for a warehouse party, you open a real warehouse.

The media portrays you as living the ultimate rock'n'roll lifestyle. What's the worst thing that's been said about you?

A few years ago I did an interview for MTV, and got asked what I did before I was in the band. So I said, "Oh I was a rent boy. I charged ten bob for a blow job, twenty bob for this and that." The *News of the World* printed it, and put I charged ten pound for a blow job, fifty pound for full sex. And it bothered me, I went a bit dolly. But if someone was to say I was a rent boy or a homo now, I wouldn't give a fuck. That might have mithered me eight years ago, it doesn't now, because I've grown up. I ain't secretly gay anyway, so even if they wrote it, it wouldn't bother me.

I suppose the worst thing anyone could say is that you're boring?
Stupid, ignorant, whatever.

Have people said that?

Yeah, probably because I'm Northern and cos I get filmed all the time off my tits - usually drunk or stoned - so that's how people see you all the time. Maybe I was like that all the time when I was younger. Now I get off my tits when I'm doing a gig or doing interviews because it's fucking boring. When I'm at home with my family I have a couple of lagers, smoke a bit of weed and that's it.

So then, what's the type of question that you would never answer in an interview?

I don't know, you'll have to ask it me.

Fancy a shag?

I always fancy a shag.

Oh. Er... do you believe in aliens?

It's more ridiculous to believe that there's

nothing about, only us. That just seems stupid. And impossible.

Had any psychic experiences?

No, I'm not a big ghost-head. Ghosts I think are bollocks. I certainly think we only use a little bit of our brain. We were born with the capability of extra-sensory perception. The slot's in there to plug the wire into, it's just that we don't plug it in. And I don't see that as being weird. The mind is capable of doing a lot of things that we just don't know about.

Like in Huxley's book *The Doors of Perception*?

Well, I'm not going to turn round and start telling every little fucker to start smoking pot... but when I was a kid I wasn't interested in history or physics, but when I started smoking pot and dropping trips I wanted to get involved in how things work. Dropping a bit of acid got me interested in thinking about the possibilities.

Who's the maddest person you've met?

Keith Allen's a fucking lunatic in't he, mad as a fucking hatter. He's brilliant. We was all in the dressing room at TOTP and Julia Carling just stood there, and he came up to her and just ripped her t-shirt off so her tits were hanging out. She was laughing and everything, didn't give a fuck. We've got it on camera. We nearly put it in our new video.

What's the weirdest film you've seen?

I've seen loads of those animal sex films and I don't get off seeing someone sticking an alsatian or donkey's dick up their twat. I watch it but it don't give me a hard-on.

Any recurrent dreams?

I've had a dream that I've had all my life, ever since I was a little kid. It's about this white blanket: it's dead nice, and it's got no wrinkles in it. Then all of a sudden there's wrinkles all over. And it's like feeling cotton wool. It's a weird one. You really get involved with dreams when you're an opium freak. My poison is opium. I've got to stages where I wouldn't get out of bed for days because I was so into my dreams.

If you were cloned, what would it be like?

I wouldn't have myself cloned. I'd have my dad stuffed when he dies and put him in a glass case with a fig leaf over his knob and a spear in his hand, and keep him in the hallway of my house.

Black Grape's new single Get Higher is released on 20 October. The album, Stupid Stupid Stupid, is out on 10 November, on Radioactive Records.

INTERVIEW BY CLAIRE COAKLEY



"I thought he was a prick. Pretentious fucking prick."

Shaun on Elton John



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